



**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC POLICY AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms

Tuesday, April 15, 2025  
9:45 AM

*or*

*Upon Adjournment of Previous Meeting*

**Chair:** Dean C. Colson

**Vice Chair:** Alberto R. Taño

**Members:** Noël C. Barengo, Francesca Casanova, George Heisel,  
Alexander M. Peraza, Roger Tovar – *Athletics liaison*

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks Dean C. Colson
2. Approval of Minutes Dean C. Colson
3. Action Items
  - AP1. Proposed Amendment to Regulation FIU-108 Access to Student Education Records Elizabeth M. Bejar
  - AP2. New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Science in Business and Government Leadership Elizabeth M. Bejar
  - AP3. New Program Proposal: Master of Science in Business and Government Leadership Elizabeth M. Bejar
  - AP4. Program Termination: Master of Science in Telecommunications and Networking Elizabeth M. Bejar
  - AP5. Request for Approval to Seek a New Institutional Accreditor Elizabeth M. Bejar
4. Information and Discussion Items: No Action Required
  - 4.1 Student Government Updates Francesca Casanova
  - 4.2 Faculty Senate Updates Noël C. Barengo
5. Academic Affairs Regular Reports: For Information Only
  - I. Enrollment Management and Services

**5. Academic Affairs Regular Reports** *(Continued...)*

- II. Faculty Senate
- III. Florida International University and Baptist Health South Florida Collaboration
- IV. Information Technology
- V. Research and Economic Development/ University Graduate School
- VI. Student Affairs

**6. New Business**

**Dean C. Colson**

**7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

**Dean C. Colson**

## Meeting Book - 04.15.25 - Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee Meeting

### 1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

Dean C. Colson

### 2. Approval of Minutes

Dean C. Colson

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### 3. Action Items

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Noël C. Barengo

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6. New Business  
Dean C. Colson

7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment  
Dean C. Colson



April 15, 2025

**Subject: Approval of Minutes of Meeting held February 13, 2025**

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**Proposed Committee Action:**

Approval of Minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on February 13, 2025.

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**Background Information:**

Committee members will review and approve the Minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on February 13, 2025.

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**Supporting Documentation:** Minutes: Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting, February 13, 2025

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Dean C. Colson, *Chair, Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee*

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**Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee**  
**February 13, 2025**  
**FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms**

**MINUTES**

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**1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks**

The Florida International University Board of Trustees' Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Dean C. Colson on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 11:00 AM.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Trustees Dean C. Colson, *Committee Chair*; Alberto R. Taño, *Committee Vice Chair*; Noël C. Barengo; Francesca Casanova; and Roger Tovar, *Board Chair and Athletics Liaison*.

The following Board members were also in attendance: Board Vice Chair Carlos A. Duarte and Trustees Alan Gonzalez, George Heisel, Jesus Lebeña, Alexander M. Peraza, Yaffa Popack, and Marc D. Sarnoff.

Committee Chair Colson welcomed new Trustees George Heisel, Jesus Lebeña, and Alexander M. Peraza.

Provost and Executive Vice President Elizabeth M. Bejar provided updates related to research, recognized FIU faculty members Dr. Mark Finlayson and Dr. Remy Dou who received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), acknowledged that FIU is one (1) of nine (9) Universities to receive the Purple Star Campus Designation in the State University System, and mentioned the 24<sup>th</sup> annual South Beach Wine and Food Festival scheduled for February 20-23, 2025.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Committee Chair Colson asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on November 21, 2024. Hearing none, a motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on November 21, 2024.

**3. Action Items**

**AP1. Proposed Amendment to Regulation FIU-1103 Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency**

Provost Bejar presented the proposed amendments to Regulation FIU-1103 Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency, noting that the regulation is being amended

to comply with the recent amendments made to Florida Board of Governors (BOG) Regulation 8.003. She explained that the regulation now requires each university board of trustees to outline a process for textbook and instructional materials approval and adoption in a university regulation, and that faculty and instructors attest that all required course materials have been reviewed for each course they teach each semester and are appropriate for the course.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the revisions to Regulation FIU-1103 Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency, and delegate authority to the University President to approve any subsequent non-material amendments based on comments to the Regulation received from the Florida Board of Governors and as a result of the regulation-making process.

**AP2. Updated Continued Exclusion of Trustees other than the Board Chair, Updated Continued Exclusion of the Board of Trustees Corporate Secretary, exclusion of the Interim President, appointment of the Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer as the Interim Senior Management Official and appointment of the updated members of the Key Management Personnel**

Provost Bejar presented an updated continued exclusion resolution. She pointed out that by previous resolutions the FIU Board of Trustees (BOT) excluded all of the Trustees except for the Chair of the BOT, from the requirements for a personnel security clearance. She added that the BOT also excluded the BOT Corporate Secretary from the requirements for a personnel security clearance. Provost Bejar explained that the composition of the BOT has changed since the adoption of the last resolution and therefore, the exclusion of BOT members must be updated. She added that the proposed resolution updates the named members of the BOT to include the new Trustees George Heisel, Jesus Lebeña and Alexander M. Peraza, and continues the exclusion of Trustees, other than the Board Chair, and also continues the exclusion of the BOT Corporate Secretary from the requirements for a personnel security clearance. She explained that the proposed resolution has been revised to account for the Presidential transition and updates the Key Management Personnel to include the Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer as the Interim Senior Management Official. She commented on the composition of the Key Management Personnel.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees adopt a resolution that updates the exclusion of the named members of the FIU Board of Trustees and the Interim President, continues the exclusion of the Board of Trustees Corporate Secretary from the requirements for a personnel security clearance, appoints the Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer as the Interim Senior Management Official (SMO) and appoints the updated members of the Key Management Personnel (KMP).

**AP3. Master Affiliation with Nicklaus Children's Hospital**

Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (FIU HWCOM) Dr. Juan C. Cendan presented the Master Affiliation with Nicklaus Children's Hospital. He commented on the benefits of an academic affiliation, and highlighted affiliations of top-ranked colleges of medicine across the United States. He provided an



organizational overview of Nicklaus Children's Hospital and the shared goals and aspirations of FIU HWCOT and Nicklaus Children's Health System. Sr. VP and Dean Cendan recognized the key participants involved in the discussions between Nicklaus and FIU HWCOT. He presented the affiliation development pathway and the overarching vision and goals. He explained that there is already alignment between FIU HWCOT and Nicklaus in the areas of strategy and operations, and financial opportunities. He discussed the impacts of incremental funding on the FIU HWCOT. He presented a summary of the affiliation model and next steps. Sr. VP and Dean Cendan referred to the updated resolution provided to the Trustees. Committee Chair Colson, and Trustees Noël C. Barengo, Alan Gonzalez, and Alberto R. Taño provided comments in support of the proposed affiliation with Nicklaus Children's Hospital.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees adopt the resolution set forth in the Board materials to (1) authorize FIU to finalize and execute the Master Affiliation Agreement between FIU and Nicklaus Children's Hospital, which will expand the Parties' tripartite mission and will provide new financial opportunities available to FIU and/or Nicklaus Children's Hospital because of the alliance; (2) establish a health services support organization that will serve to coordinate, enhance and help facilitate oversight of the relationship between FIU and Nicklaus Children's Hospital; and (3) provide authorizations and delegations to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and/or President as described in the resolution.

Board Chair Roger Tovar, University President Kenneth A. Jessell, and Board Vice Chair Carlos A. Duart commented in support of the affiliation with Nicklaus Children's Hospital and expanded on the process that led to the development of said affiliation.

#### **4. Information and Discussion Items**

##### **4.1 Alternative Admissions**

Provost Bejar presented the discussion item on alternative admissions, outlined in Regulation FIU-412 Undergraduate Admissions. She provided background information relevant to the discussion including that FIU is a member of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, the College Board, and the Association of Chief Admission Officers of Public Universities. She added that BOG regulations require each university board of trustees to develop regulations that comport with requirements and allow for exceptions. She commented that BOG regulation provides the authority to grant exceptions under the appropriate university committee and FIU Regulation-412 delegates authority to the Provost to establish the total number of first time in college (FTIC) students admissible annually through the alternative admission process, and stipulates that the rates of retention, academic success, and graduation rates of students admitted to FIU through an alternative admissions process must be annually reviewed and presented to the BOT. Provost Bejar highlighted the last five (5) years of data on alternative admissions, noting that in 2023-24, 1.3% or 182 of 14,342 FTIC and transfer students were admitted by exception. She added that of the 6,145 FTIC students in 2023-2024, 158 (2.6%) were admitted by exception. She stated that while the population sizes are small, they are monitored and adjusted as needed, and that there are no concerns related to retention. She provided data related to the on-going graduation rates of students who went through the alternative admissions process as of 2023-2024.

#### **4.2 Student Government Updates**

Trustee Francesca Casanova shared that Student Government Association (SGA) elections are taking place, with four (4) parties and over 120 students running for different elected positions. She mentioned that campaigning began, voting will take place on March 4 and 5, 2025, and that the election results will be announced on March 7, 2025. She mentioned that the SGA Activity and Service Budget Committee finalized the allocations of over \$14.4M to over 70 entities. She mentioned that funding for the Registered Student Organizations Council was prioritized, and that funding was reduced for programs that students are no longer engaging in. Trustee Casanova thanked President Jessell on behalf of the student body.

#### **4.3 Faculty Senate Updates**

Trustee Noël C. Barengo, as Chair of the Faculty Senate, expressed the Faculty Senate's disappointment with the process of the appointment of the FIU Interim President. He explained that Board Chair Roger Tovar has agreed to attend a Steering Committee meeting of the Faculty Senate. Trustee Barengo outlined the expectations of the Faculty Senate related to the next FIU presidential search, including that the search be conducted with transparency, in national scope, and designed to attract highly qualified candidates with the Presidential Search Committee developing a position description consistent with FIU's mission, strategic plan, and aspirational goals. He shared that Lieutenant Governor Jeanette M. Nuñez accepted an invitation to attend the Faculty Senate meeting on February 18, 2025.

Trustee Barengo congratulated Dr. Mark Finlayson and Dr. Remy Dou for receiving the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). He shared that a total of six (6) courses will be added to the approved general education group II course list under the BOG General Education Review Process. He commented on the development of a panel discussion on academic freedom. Trustee Barengo mentioned faculty activities including the productions of "The Soul of a Swimmer" on February 15, 2025, and "Cinderella" on February 14, 2025. He remarked on the next Faculty Get-Together scheduled for February 21, 2025. Trustee Barengo thanked President Jessell for his service.

#### **5. Academic Affairs Regular Reports**

There were no questions from the Committee members in terms of the Academic Affairs regular reports included as part of the agenda materials.

#### **6. New Business**

No new business was raised.

#### **7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Committee Chair Dean C. Colson adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 11:55 AM.



April 15, 2025

**Subject: Proposed Amendment to Regulation FIU-108 Access to Student Education Records**

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**Proposed Action:**

Florida International University Board of Trustees approval of the proposed amendments to Regulation FIU-108 Access to Student Education Records, and delegation of authority to the University President to approve any subsequent non-material amendments based on comments to the Regulation received from the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) and as a result of the regulation-making process.

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**Background Information:**

Regulation FIU-108 Access to Student Education Records is being amended to include updates to the University's use and integration of the Microsoft 365 platform; updating permissible internal disclosures to include University email addresses; defining who is a "University Official"; updating terms, titles, language and applications; and clarifying that directory information includes photographs that are independent of any additional personal identifiers.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) codified in 20 U.S.C. section 1232g, and sections 1002.225 and 1006.52 of Florida Statutes requires that institutions maintain student education records in a confidential and secure manner.

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**Supporting Documentation:** Regulation FIU-108 Access to Student Education Records

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Elizabeth M. Bejar

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**THE FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO REGULATION**

**REGULATION NO.:** FIU-108

**REGULATION TITLE:** Access to Student Education Records

**SUMMARY:** Proposed changes to Regulation 108 include adding definition of the term “University Official”; updating permissible internal disclosures and access to include email; updating terms, titles, language and applications; clarifying directory information includes photographs independent of any additional personal identifiers.

**TEXT OF REGULATION:** The full text of the proposed Regulation can be viewed below and on the website of The Florida International University Board of Trustees, <http://regulations.fiu.edu>. If you would like a copy of the proposed Regulation, please contact Eli Deville, Departmental Administrator, Office of the General Counsel, (305) 348-2103, [devillee@fiu.edu](mailto:devillee@fiu.edu).

**AUTHORITY:** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) codified in 20 U.S.C. section 1232g, and sections 1002.225 and 1006.52, Florida Statutes

**NAME OF PERSON INITIATING PROPOSED REGULATION:**

Dr. Elizabeth Bejar, Provost, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

ANY PERSON SEEKING TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REGULATION MUST SUBMIT COMMENTS IN WRITING TO THE CONTACT PERSON LISTED BELOW. ALL WRITTEN COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE CONTACT PERSON WITHIN 14 CALENDAR DAYS OF THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

**CONTACT PERSON REGARDING THE PROPOSED REGULATION:**

Eli Deville, Departmental Administrator, Office of the General Counsel  
Florida International University, 11200 SW 8th Street, PC 511, Miami, FL 33199  
Email: [devillee@fiu.edu](mailto:devillee@fiu.edu) Phone: 305-348-2103, Fax: (305) 348-3272.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION:** March 14, 2025

**FULL TEXT OF THE REGULATION IS PROVIDED BELOW**

## FIU-108 Access to Student Education Records.

Florida International University (University) maintains Student education records in a confidential and secure manner in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) codified in 20 U.S.C. section 1232g, and sections 1002.225 and 1006.52, Florida Statutes.-

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The University will not release or permit access to education records, or the personally identifiable information contained therein, maintained on a Student except as otherwise permitted by law and this Regulation. Responsibility for custody of all Student educational records and personally identifiable information within them ultimately belongs to the University Registrar. Any University official in possession of education records is required to comply with FERPA and this Regulation. -The University Registrar or designated custodian shall ensure that the procedures required by law and this Regulation are in place to control access to and disclosure of Student education records and personally identifiable information contained therein.

### 1. Definitions.-

a. Agent is any individual or organization who, pursuant to a written agreement, has expressed or implied authorization to represent or act for the University. All agreements designating an Agent with access to Education Records must be reviewed by the University Registrar.

b. University Official is any person employed by the University to perform assigned teaching, research, administrative, professional or other responsibilities (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators, residence hall staff, FIU Police).

~~b-c.~~ Custodian of Records is the University Registrar and any other designated University employee or agent in possession of education records.-

~~c-d.~~ Directory Information means information designated by the University that may be, in the University's sole discretion, disclosed upon request without Student consent. -Students may opt out of the University's ability to disclose such information by logging in to the myFIU portal.-

~~d-e.~~ Education Records means records maintained by the University and its Agents that contain information directly related to a Student or applicant. -A record is any information or data recorded in any medium, including, but not limited to handwriting, print, or digital/electronic, USB drives, or cloud storage. Education Records do not include:

- i. Sole Possession Records. Personal records created by a University employee or agent that are created as a personal memory aid, kept in the sole possession of the University employee or agent who created it; and the record has not been disclosed to any other persons, including the Student, except to a temporary substitute.-
- ii. Employment Records. Records used only in relation to an individual's University employment. However, the following are education records rather than Employment Records:

1. Records relating to a Student's University employment if the position in which the Student is employed depends on their status as a Student; and-
  2. Records relating to a Student's University employment if the Student receives a grade or credit based on their performance as an employee.-
- iii. Alumni Records. Records created after a Student has graduated from the University.-
  - iv. Law Enforcement Records. Records created and maintained by the University Police Department used solely for law enforcement purposes. ~~No member of the University Police Department shall have access to Education Records where this Regulation authorizes release.~~
  - v. Treatment Records. Records made, used, or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist acting in their University recognized professional capacity used only in connection with treatment of the Student, and disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. -For purposes of this definition, treatment does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of any academic program or activity.
- ~~e.f.~~ Pre-enrollment Records are records relating to an individual's application for admission to the University prior to the individual's enrollment in the program for which the application was made. -Although Pre-Enrollment Records are not considered education records under FERPA, section 1006.52, Florida Statutes, requires Pre-enrollment Records to be treated in accordance with FERPA.
- ~~f.g.~~ Personally Identifiable Information means information which includes a personal identifier, such as the Student's social security number or a Student number, or a list of personal characteristics which would make the Student's identity easily traceable.
- ~~g.h.~~ Student means an individual enrolled at the University, on or off-campus, including on-line courses and non-degree seeking Students.-

~~1.2.~~ **Annual Notification.** The University will publish a notice of Student rights under FERPA on its website and in the ~~graduate and undergraduate catalogs.~~ University catalog. Additional means of notification may be utilized including e-mails to Students. The notice will include, but is not limited to, Student rights relating to educational records, including the right to file complaints, the procedures to be followed in order to exercise such rights, and the types of information entered in the educational records maintained by the University.

~~2.3.~~ **Internal Disclosures in Microsoft 365.** ~~Beginning in May 2022, FIU will migrate to Microsoft 365 to enable more efficient and secure operations under one platform.- This includes of Student access to Microsoft Teams which can be~~ Emails. FIU student email addresses are used to communicate and collaborate on supported FIU applications (e.g., Teams, Office 365, Zoom) with members of the University community. ~~Microsoft Teams will display the Student name and FIU email address- to any member~~ addresses may be accessed by members of the University community

with an active FIU ~~Microsoft Teams~~ account. ~~This information may only be~~ Because student email addresses are used on multiple communication platforms for internal legitimate educational purposes. ~~A Student may request exclusion of their name and email address from Microsoft Teams by logging into their myFIU portal.~~ internal disclosures of student e-mail addresses amongst or between University Officials and/or other students will not constitute a FERPA violation.

~~3.~~—

~~2.~~4. **Location and Custodians of Education Records.** Education records are maintained throughout the University and there is no prerequisite for information to be maintained in a specific location for it to be considered an education record. ~~The Student is responsible for specifically identifying their education records for review to the University Registrar or applicable Custodian of Records. The University Registrar shall serve or designate a University employee to serve as the Custodian of Records. The following University employees are designated as a Custodian of Records for the specified records. All records listed below are located at the Modesto Maidique Campus:~~

- a. **Academic Counseling** records are maintained by the Associate Provost for Academic and Career Success. Additionally, academic counseling records may be maintained by various departments or colleges depending on the Student's field of study.
- b. **Academic Records** are maintained by the University Registrar.
- c. **Athletic Records** are maintained by Athletics Compliance Office.
- d. **College of Medicine Records** are maintained by the College of Medicine Registrar.
- e. **Continuing Education Records** are maintained by the Executive Director of Continuing and Professional Studies.
- f. **Disciplinary Records** are maintained in the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Office.
- g. **Housing Records** are maintained by the Director of University Housing.
- h. **International Student Records** are maintained by the Director, International Student Services.
- i. **Personal Non-Academic Counseling Records** are maintained by the Director of, Counseling and Psychological Services.
- j. **Placement Records** are maintained by the Director of Career and Talent Management.
- k. **Student Financial Aid Records** are maintained by the Director of Financial Aid.
- l. **Student Financial Records** are maintained by the Director of Student Financials.
- m. **Veteran Records** are maintained by the Director of the Office of Veterans and Military Affairs.

~~3.~~5. **Inspection of Education Records.** Students who wish to review their education records should submit a written request to the University Registrar and/or designated Custodian of Records. The request must be in writing and sufficiently identify the



education records sought.-

- a. Educational records shall be open for inspection; only to the Student; or ~~parents of dependent Students as defined in Section 152 of~~ designee specifically authorized by the Internal Revenue Code-student in writing as required by FERPA. The Custodian of Records shall require the Student, ~~or parents of the Student when applicable,~~ requesting access to present proper identification.-
- b. The University Registrar or designee shall advise the Student when and where the records will be available for review. -Access to Education Records shall be granted within a reasonable period, but in no case later than forty-five (45)-~~b-~~ calendar days after the University Registrar or designee receives the Student's written request.- The University Registrar or designee shall be present while the Student reviews the education records and retains custody of the records.—
- ~~a.c.~~ c. When Education Records contain Personally Identifiable Information about more than one (1) Student, a Student may only inspect the information which relates to that Student.—
- ~~d.~~ d. A Student's right to review their education records does not entitle the Student to copies of their records. -In the sole discretion of the University Registrar or designee, the Student must demonstrate that failure to provide the Student with copies of requested education records will effectively deny the Student the right to ~~review such records. In the majority of cases, copies will not be provided to the Student.~~ review such records. In the majority of cases, copies will not be provided to the Student.
- ~~e.e.~~ e. The University will charge the following fees for furnishing copies of Education Records, or any material included therein:
  - i. Copies of official transcripts – Ten dollars (\$10.00);
  - ii. Copies of all other educational records – Fifteen cents (\$.15) per page for copying, plus any supplies and mailing costs.
- ~~d.f.~~ f. The University reserves the right to refuse a Student's ability to review the following records:
  - i. The financial records of a Student's parents or any information contained therein;
  - ~~ii.~~ ii. Statements and letters of recommendation prepared by University employees or submitted with the Student's application for admission-  
~~ii-~~ placed in the Student's file prior to January 1, 1975, or which the Student has waived their right of access; or
  - iii. Records excluded from the definition of Education Record.—
- ~~e.g.~~ g. The University will maintain records of the individuals requesting access to Education Records.

**4.6. Access to and Release of Records without Consent.** The following persons and organizations are considered "university officials" and may have access to personally identifiable information without the Student's prior consent:

- a. Faculty, administrators, staff and Agents of the University, the Florida International University Board of Trustees, or the Florida Board of Governors

whom the University Registrar or Custodian of Education Records has determined to have a legitimate educational interest in the record.

- b. Officials of other colleges and universities in which the Student intends to enroll.
- c. Persons or organizations providing financial aid for which the Student has applied or received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for aid, the amount of aid, conditions for aid, or to enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.-
- d. Accrediting organizations carrying out their accrediting functions.
- e. Persons in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. With the exception of subpoenas from federal grand juries or subpoenas issued for law enforcement purposes that order the University to not disclose the existence of the subpoena, the University will notify the Student before the compliance date.
- f. Disclosure to a court if a parent or Student has initiated legal action against the University or if the University has initiated a legal action against a parent or Student.
- g. Appropriate parties in connection with emergencies, as determined by the University, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the Student or other persons.
- h. To the victim of a Student Conduct and Honor Code violation involving violence or non-forcible sexual misconduct.-
- ~~b.i.~~ i. Other persons who are authorized by federal and state law and regulations to have access to or receive copies of such information.

**~~5.7.~~ Directory Information.** -Directory Information is designated as:-

- a. Student's name;-
- b. Major and minor fields of study;
- c. Student classification;
- d. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- e. Weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- f. Dates of attendance;-
- g. Degrees and/or awards;-
- h. Most recent previous educational institution attended; and
- i. ~~Student's~~ The student's photographic image- independent of any additional personal identifiers.

**~~6.8.~~ Requests to Amend Educational Records.**

Students who challenge the accuracy of their educational records shall file a written request for amendment with the Custodian of Records. The Student shall also present to the Custodian of Records copies of all available evidence relating to the information being challenged. The Custodian of Records shall consider the request and notify the Student in writing within fifteen ~~(15)~~ (15) business days whether the request will be granted or denied and if denied the right to a hearing on the matter. During that time, any challenge may be settled informally between the Student, ~~or the parents of a dependent Student,~~ and the Custodian of Records, in consultation with other appropriate University employees. If an

agreement is reached, it shall be in writing and signed by all parties involved. A copy of such agreement shall be maintained in the Student's records. A ~~Student or the parents of a dependent~~ Student shall not have the right to challenge through this process grades, disciplinary actions, grievances, or similar matters.

**a. Hearing Rights and Procedures.**

i. **Rights of Appeal.** A Student whose request for amendment to educational records has not been settled or has been denied may file a request for a hearing within thirty (30) business days of the receipt of the letter of denial. The request shall be in writing and shall be filed with the ~~Senior Vice President for Academic and~~ Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee. The request shall set forth the legal and factual basis for seeking correction of the Student's education records. Upon receipt, the ~~Senior Vice President~~ Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall appoint a disinterested University official to serve as a hearing officer. The hearing officer shall schedule a hearing within twenty-five (25) business days of the date of receipt of the request for a hearing. The Student shall be given written notice of the time, date, and place of the hearing.

~~i.~~ ii. **Hearing Procedures.** The hearing shall be informal in nature but shall afford the Student an opportunity to present evidence relative to the issues raised in the appeal. The Custodian of Records shall have the same rights as the Student.

~~ii.~~ iii. **Hearing Officer's Recommended Order.** The hearing officer shall issue a recommended order within twenty-five (25) business days of the close of the hearing. In rendering a recommended order, the hearing officer shall consider only such evidence as was offered at the hearing. The hearing officer shall include in the recommended order a summary of the evidence presented and the reasons for his or her recommendations. The original report shall be filed with the ~~Senior Vice President for Academic and~~ Chief Student Affairs Officer and a copy of the recommended order shall be sent to the ~~Student or the parents of a dependent~~ Student and to the Custodian of Records. Upon receipt, the ~~Senior Vice President~~ Chief Student Affairs Officer shall have ten (10) business days in which to issue a final determination on the issues raised in the appeal. If a determination is made that the information in the education record does not require correction, then the Student ~~or a parent of a dependent Student~~ shall have the right to place a statement in the record commenting that the information has been challenged and the reason for the challenge.

9. **Waiver of Right of Access.** ~~Students and parents of dependent~~ Students have the right to waive their right of access to confidential letters of recommendation and other documents that evaluate Student academic performance.-

~~b.~~ a. Such waivers shall be in writing and made a part of the official academic record. A waiver of right to access shall be effective only when the Student ~~or the parents of a dependent Student are~~ is notified, upon request, of the names of all persons who are submitting confidential recommendations or evaluations

and when the confidential letters of recommendation and other evaluative documents are used solely for the purpose intended.

~~6.b.~~ The University may not condition admission, financial aid, or receipt of any other service or benefit offered by the University, by another public educational institution in Florida or by any other public agency upon being provided a waiver of the right to access by the Student ~~or the parents of a dependent Student.~~

~~7.10.~~ **Requests for Education Records in Research or Contracts.**

- a. All requests for academic research or contracts dealing with information from Education Records shall be referred to the University Registrar. Such requests must be in writing and specifically set forth the type(s) of information to which access is requested and the intended scope of the research project or contract.
- b. The applicable Custodian of Records and the University Registrar shall determine whether to grant the request, in whole or in part, and may condition access upon a guarantee that the researcher or agent will appropriately safeguard the data, no Personally Identifiable Information is published or made available to others, or other reasonable conditions.

11. **Violations.** Any violations of this Regulation must be reported to the University Registrar at [ferpa@fiu.edu](mailto:ferpa@fiu.edu) or confidentially reported to the Ethical Panther Line by visiting [compliance.fiu.edu/hotline](http://compliance.fiu.edu/hotline).

Specific Authority: Art. IX, sec. 7, Fla. Const. History—Formerly 6C8-1.06(3), Amended 4-3-84, 11-2-89, 1-3-93, 11-3-02, Formerly 6C8-11.003, Amended 9-12-08, Amended 3-5-2020, Amended 6-21-2022, Amended \_\_\_\_\_.



April 15, 2025

**Subject: New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Science in Business and Government Leadership**

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**Proposed Action:**

Florida International University Board of Trustees approval of the Bachelor of Science in Business and Government Leadership (CIP 30.5101) new program proposal.

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**Background Information:**

In response to the Florida Legislature's establishment of the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom (s. 1004.64991, *2024 Florida Statutes*), Florida International University faculty propose the implementation of a new Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Business and Government Leadership (CIP code: 30.5101). The proposed degree will respond to the increasing workforce demand for skilled professionals who are equipped to lead in a number of fields, including business management, government, and organizational leadership.

The BS in Business and Government Leadership is comprehensive. It is designed to provide students with foundational knowledge in economics, management, communications, and political leadership, while fostering critical thinking and practical decision-making abilities. Students will be positioned for employment as business and management analysts, communications specialists, or legislative aides.

The baccalaureate degree will address the growing demand for skilled professionals equipped to lead in various sectors (e.g., business, government, nonprofit organizations), with a focus on free market principles and interdisciplinary leadership skills. Particularly in South Florida, the business and professional services sector continues to expand, driven by the region's role as a hub for international trade and governance. For example, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity projects the percent of management analyst job openings to grow by approximately 15% statewide by 2031. FIU aims to help meet this growing need with the new BS in Business and Government Leadership.

Each university board of trustees shall approve new degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and specialist levels for implementation in accordance with section (4) of Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.011 – *Academic Degree Program Coordination and Approval*.

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**Supporting Documentation:** Executive Summary: Bachelor of Science in Business and Government Leadership (CIP 30.5101) New Program Proposal

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Elizabeth M. Bejar

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## **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP**

### **Executive Summary**

The Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom proposes the establishment of a 120-credit Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Business and Government Leadership (CIP 30.5101).

The baccalaureate degree will address the growing demand for skilled professionals equipped to lead in various sectors (e.g., business, government, nonprofit organizations), with a focus on free market principles and interdisciplinary leadership skills. This comprehensive program is designed to provide students with foundational knowledge in economics, management, communications, and political leadership, while fostering critical thinking and practical decision-making abilities.

The degree program requires the following 12 core credits, which will be taught by faculty members affiliated with the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom:

- Foundational Principles for Leaders in Free Market
- Political Leadership in the United States
- Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis for Leadership
- Leadership Capstone

An additional 18 credits are required, consisting of 6 credits each from the College of Business, the Department of Economics, and the School of Communication. Students will take an additional 15 elective credits in one of the following disciplines: economics, management, communications, entrepreneurship, politics, public policy, international relations, finance, or a related discipline. The curriculum emphasizes interdisciplinary learning and real-world application, training students to address organizational challenges and communicate effectively in free market societies.

## Labor Market Demand

Leaders with interdisciplinary skills are increasingly sought after in sectors such as business management, government, and organizational leadership. In South Florida, the business and professional services sector continues to expand, driven by the region’s role as a hub for international trade and governance. Moreover, the expansion of global and local economies has heightened the need for professionals who can navigate complex leadership environments—a need FIU aims to meet through the establishment of this new degree.

The proposed BS in Business and Government Leadership program will allow students to acquire the knowledge and skills that—upon graduation—will increase their competitiveness for numerous types of jobs (e.g., business analysts, management analysts, organizational managers, communications specialists, legislative aides, nonprofit coordinators, corporate strategists).

The table below reflects projected labor market demand:

Labor Demand Projections by Occupation (in Florida and United States)						
Occupation	Percent Change in Job Openings		Annual Average Job Openings		Total # of New Jobs	
	Florida 2023-2031	United States 2022-2032	Florida 2023-2031	United States 2022-2032	Florida 2023-2031	United States 2022-2032
<b>Managers, All Others (SOC 11-9199)</b>	6.1%	3.3%	5,217	94,400	3,593	41,000
<b>Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Others (SOC 19-3099)</b>	5.9%	1.7%	222	3,000	129	600
<b>Management Analysts (SOC 13-1111)</b>	14.5%	9.7%	9,797	92,900	12,341	95,700
Source: <i>BOG Search by CIP or Employment Projections Data Tool v7.0 (2024)</i> SOC=Standard Occupational Classification code system						

The rate of job openings is expected to increase, both nationally and in Florida, for the occupations of “Managers, All Others,” “Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Others,” and “Management Analysts” over the next 6 to 7 years.<sup>1</sup> “Managers, All Others” is expected to have a 6.1% growth rate in Florida by 2031 (resulting in 3,593 new jobs). The projections include 5,217 job openings annually in Florida. Although a similar projected percent change (5.9%) in

<sup>1</sup> The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used to classify specific occupations (denoted here in quotation marks) for the purpose of collecting, calculating, or disseminating data. The Board of Governors uses the SOC system to link to the jobs that graduates will be qualified to perform based on the training provided to students in a given program.



openings is cited for “Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Others,” this rate represents 129 new jobs by 2031 and 222 average job openings each year. The “Management Analysts” occupation is expected to have a 14.5% growth rate by 2031 (resulting in 12,341 new jobs). The projections include 9,797 job openings annually in Florida. Data published by the United States Department of Labor similarly project job growth in these areas.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The development of the BS in Business and Government Leadership responds to the Florida Legislature’s mandate concerning the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom. The goals of the center include studying “the effect of government and free market economies on individual freedom, educational freedom, and human prosperity” [[s. 1004.64991, Florida Statutes, 2024](#)]. This mandate is aligned with the *FIU Experience Impact 2030 Strategic Plan*, which envisions FIU becoming “a destination university for innovative education and cutting-edge research, an employer of choice, and leader in economic and societal impact” by 2030 [[FIU Experience Impact 2030 Strategic Plan, p. 12](#)]. The degree also aligns with a priority area identified in the Board of Governors’ *SUS 30: Extraordinary Impact* strategic plan. The creation of this degree will support the “Elevating Student Success” priority area [[SUS 30: Extraordinary Impact, pp. 10-11](#)].

The implementation of the BS in Business and Government Leadership will leverage FIU’s existing strengths and infrastructure. Faculty affiliated with the Center, alongside experts from the College of Business, the Department of Economics, and the School of Communication, will pursue research and teaching related to leadership and economic freedom. The program’s interdisciplinary design and capstone project will provide undergraduate students with hands-on learning opportunities, building on FIU’s robust academic ecosystem. Graduates will be well-positioned to pursue graduate-level education in FIU’s proposed Master of Science in Business and Government Leadership (also presented for approval at the April 15, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting), or other related graduate and professional degrees.

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April 15, 2025

**Subject: New Program Proposal: Master of Science in Business and Government Leadership**

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**Proposed Action:**

Florida International University Board of Trustees approval of the Master of Science in Business and Government Leadership (CIP 52.0213) new program proposal.

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**Background Information:**

In response to the Florida Legislature's establishment of the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom (s. 1004.64991, *2024 Florida Statutes*), Florida International University (FIU) faculty propose the implementation of a new Master of Science (MS) degree in Business and Government Leadership (CIP code: 52.0213). The proposed degree will prepare seasoned and aspiring leaders to address the complexities of leadership in free market societies.

The MS in Business and Government Leadership is interdisciplinary. The curriculum is designed to equip students with the skills required to ask critical questions, propose innovative solutions, and navigate complex organizational environments. Students will be positioned for employment as managers across a variety of sectors. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity project more than 36,000 leadership-related job openings in Florida, and 284,000 nationally, within the next 6 to 7 years. In Florida, the percentage of leadership job openings is expected to grow by 10-15% over the next decade, reflecting a robust need for skilled professionals in South Florida's dynamic business and government sectors. FIU aims to help meet this need through the establishment of the new MS in Business and Government Leadership.

Each university board of trustees shall approve new degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and specialist levels for implementation in accordance with section (4) of Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.011 – *Academic Degree Program Coordination and Approval*.

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**Supporting Documentation:** Executive Summary: Master of Science in Business and Government Leadership (CIP 52.0213) New Program Proposal

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Elizabeth M. Bejar

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## **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP**

### **Executive Summary**

The Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom proposes the establishment of a 30-credit Master of Science (MS) in Business and Government Leadership (CIP: 52.0213).

The master's-level degree will prepare seasoned and aspiring leaders to address the complexities of leadership in free market societies. The program emphasizes advanced practical and theoretical tools for informed decision making, guided by principles of economic and individual freedom. Students will explore leadership through graduate-level case studies, data analysis, and interdisciplinary coursework. Upon graduation, students will be equipped to respond effectively to real-world challenges in management, public policy, and organizational strategy.

The degree program requires 24 core credits, taught by faculty members affiliated with the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom; 3 credits taught by faculty in the Department of Economics, and 3 credits taught by faculty in the Department of Global Leadership and Management:

- Advanced Political Leadership in the United States
- Leadership in a Global Environment
- Data Analysis for Leaders
- National Security and Economic Freedom
- Leadership, Law and Ethics
- Advanced Negotiations and Conflict Resolution for Leaders
- Advanced Communications for Leaders
- Independent Project (three semesters of 1-credit modules)
- Economics (Department of Economics)
- Organizational Behavior (Department of Global Leadership and Management)

The MS in Business and Government Leadership will be offered as a 1-year, full-time cohort model; part-time options will be available.

## Labor Market Demand

Leaders with interdisciplinary skills are increasingly sought after in sectors such as business management, government, and organizational leadership. South Florida’s strategic position as a hub for international business and governance amplifies the need for leaders trained in economic freedom and data-driven strategies. FIU aims to meet this need through establishment of this new degree. The proposed MS in Business and Government Leadership program will produce graduates capable of meeting these demands by mastering leadership challenges at the intersection of free markets and public policy. Graduates will be equipped to ask critical questions, propose innovative solutions, and navigate complex organizational environments.

The table below reflects projected labor market demand:

Labor Demand Projections by Occupation (in Florida and United States)						
Occupation	Percent Change in Job Openings		Annual Average Job Openings		Total # of New Jobs	
	Florida 2023-2031	United States 2022-2032	Florida 2023-2031	United States 2022-2032	Florida 2023-2031	United States 2022-2032
<b>General and Operational Managers (SOC 11-1021)</b>	10%	4.2%	21,029	296,300	20,323	147,300
<b>Managers, All Others (SOC 11-9199)</b>	6.1%	3.3%	5,217	94,400	3,593	41,000
<b>Management Analysts (SOC 13-1111)</b>	14.5%	9.7%	9,797	92,900	12,341	95,700
Source: <i>BOG Search by CIP or Employment Projections Data Tool v7.0 (2024)</i> SOC=Standard Occupational Classification code system						

The above table, created from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity data, highlights strong employment prospects for leadership-related occupations. More than 36,000 job openings in Florida and 284,000 nationally are projected within the next 6 to 7 years. In Florida, leadership position openings are expected to grow by 10-15% over the next decade, reflecting a robust need for skilled professionals in South Florida’s dynamic business and government sectors.

## Strategic Alignment

The development of the MS in Business and Government Leadership responds to the Florida Legislature’s mandate concerning the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom to “study the effect of government and free market economies on individual freedom, educational freedom, and human prosperity” and to “conduct and promote research on the effect of political and economic systems on human prosperity” [[s. 1004.64991, 2024 Florida Statutes](#)]. Research across all levels will encompass curricular elements related to leadership, political institutions,

collective behavior, economic theory, and economic influences. Students will actively engage in research and capstone projects, and may partner with government and business entities.

The program also aligns with FIU's mission, which is shaped by "a profound commitment to fostering an environment and culture where faculty, researchers, and students are encouraged to pursue innovative research and creative endeavors" [*FIU Experience Impact 2030 Strategic Plan*, p. 16]. More broadly, the work of the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom will contribute to meeting the "One SUS: Areas of Expertise" Centers of Distinction area of expertise included in the Board of Governors 2030 strategic plan [*SUS 30: Extraordinary Impact*, p. 9].

The MS in Business and Government Leadership will seek to attract students with actual or potential leadership experience in business, public policy, or related fields. The program emphasizes practical skills—data analysis, negotiation, and ethical decision making—applied to real-world challenges. By integrating experiential learning with South Florida's business and government communities, the implementation of the new degree will prepare students to be independent thinkers and ethical managers able to meet local and national demands for innovative leadership.

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April 15, 2025

**Subject: Program Termination: Master of Science in Telecommunications and Networking**

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**Proposed Action:**

Florida International University Board of Trustees termination of the Master of Science in Telecommunications and Networking (CIP 14.1004).

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**Background Information:**

The faculty in the College of Engineering and Computing propose to terminate the Master of Science (MS) in Telecommunications and Networking.

To better support Florida Board of Governors goals concerning degree productivity and to streamline resources, faculty propose restructuring the MS in Telecommunications and Networking degree as a new curricular track under the existing MS in Information Technology program. The new track will be entitled "Telecommunications." Students currently enrolled in the MS in Telecommunications and Networking will be given the option to remain enrolled in the degree, completing the program by a final phase-out term of Summer 2026, or to change to the new track. Prospective students interested in pursuing study in telecommunications will be able to do so by enrolling in the MS in Information Technology.

Section (1)(d) of Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.012 Academic Program Termination and Temporary Suspension of New Enrollments states, in relevant part, that each university Board of Trustees has the responsibility and authority to approve the termination of degree programs at all levels (with the exception of master's degree programs in nursing).

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**Supporting Documentation:** Board of Governors, State University System of Florida  
Academic Degree Program Termination Form: Master of  
Science in Telecommunications and Networking

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on  
Colleges Notification Letter March 13, 2025

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Elizabeth M. Bejar

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**Academic Degree Program Termination**  
In Accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.012,  
Academic Program Termination and Temporary Suspension of New Enrollments

**Institution:** Florida International University

**Program Name:** Telecommunications and Networking

**Degree Level(s):** Master of Science      **CIP Code:** 14.1004

**Anticipated Termination Term:** Summer 2025

First term when no new students will be accepted into the program

**Anticipated Phase-Out Term:** Summer 2026

First term when no student data will be reported for this program

*Each university board of trustees has the responsibility and authority to approve termination of degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels with the exception of master's degree programs in nursing, which must be approved by the Board of Governors in accordance with Board Regulation 8.008. Upon termination of a degree program, the university will submit to the Board of Governors' office a request for termination prior to the start of the effective term. Upon resolution of any outstanding issues regarding the program's termination, the change will be added to the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory, and a letter of notification shall be provided to the institution.*

**1. Does the proposed program qualify as a Program of Strategic Emphasis, as described in the Florida Board of Governors 2025 System Strategic Plan?**

[Programs of Strategic Emphasis List](#)

☐ Yes, it does qualify as a Program of Strategic Emphasis.

XX No, it does not qualify as a Program of Strategic Emphasis.

Does the program fall under one of the CIP codes listed below that qualifies for the Programs of Strategic Emphasis Waiver? (*for baccalaureate programs only*)

CIP CODE	CIP TITLE
11.0101	Computer and Information Sciences
11.0103	Information Technology
13.1001	Special Education and Teaching
13.1202	Elementary Education and Teaching
14.0801	Civil Engineering
14.0901	Computer Engineering
14.1001	Electrical and Electronics Engineering
14.1901	Mechanical Engineering
27.0101	Mathematics
52.0301	Accounting
52.0801	Finance
52.1201	Management Information Systems

☐ Yes. If yes, students in the program will be eligible for the Programs of Strategic Emphasis waiver. Refer to [Board Regulation 7.008](#) and the [Programs of Strategic Emphasis Waiver Guidance](#).

XX No

**2. Provide a narrative rationale for the request to terminate the program.**

The number of students enrolled in the Master of Science (MS) in Telecommunications and Networking has decreased over the past several years. Leadership in the Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences evaluated the status of the degree and its required curriculum. To streamline resources, faculty and administrators determined that the curriculum should be restructured into a new Telecommunications track under another degree offering, the MS in Information Technology (CIP: 11.0103).

**3. Indicate on which campus(es) the program is being offered and the extent to which the proposed termination has had or will have an impact on enrollment, enrollment planning, and/or the reallocation of resources.**

The program historically has been offered at the main Modesto A. Maidique Campus. The proposed termination will not have an impact on enrollment, enrollment planning, or the reallocation of resources. Only four students are currently enrolled in the program, and they will be given the opportunity to complete the MS in Telecommunications and Networking, or to transfer into the MS in Information

Technology degree program. Prospective students who wish to study telecommunications will be redirected to the new Telecommunications track.

- 4. Explain how the university intends to accommodate any students or faculty currently active in the program scheduled to be terminated. State what steps have been taken to inform students and faculty of the intent to terminate the program.**

Faculty and the graduate program advisor will individually contact each enrolled student to develop an appropriate and timely track toward graduation. Students may either remain enrolled in the current degree and graduate prior to the final phase out term (i.e., Summer 2026), or may change to the newly created track. To accommodate those students wishing to remain enrolled in the MS in Telecommunications and Networking, FIU will allow students a 3-semester period for program completion.

Both the MS in Telecommunications and Networking and the MS in Information Technology degrees are offered by the Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences. Faculty voted to close the program and restructure the content under another existing degree, and therefore do not need to be informed. Faculty duties will remain unchanged, focusing on delivery of this curriculum as part of the newly created track under the MS in Information Technology.

- 5. Provide the date the teach-out plan was submitted to the institution's accreditor. Include a copy of the notification letter with your submission.**

March 13, 2025

- 6. Identify the process for evaluating and mitigating any potential negative impact of the proposed action on the current representation of faculty and students in the program.**

The representation of faculty and students in the program will not be negatively impacted, as all students can continue to pursue this field of study through the Telecommunications track (under the MS in Information Technology degree).

As previously indicated, faculty members will be unaffected by this degree closure. They will remain in the faculty of the Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences, continuing to deliver courses as part of the MS in Information Technology.

- 7. If this is a baccalaureate program, explain how and when the Florida College System institutions have been notified of its termination so that students can be notified accordingly.**

Not applicable. This program is not a baccalaureate program.

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**Required Signatures**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provost's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board of Trustees Chair's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved by the Board of Trustees

March 13, 2025

Belle S. Wheelan, PhD  
President  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4497

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

On March 12, 2025, the Florida International University (FIU) Faculty Senate made the decision to close the Master of Science (MS) in Telecommunications and Networking. The FIU Board of Trustees has the authority to give final approval for degree closures; the termination of the MS in Telecommunications and Networking is slated for Board of Trustees discussion and approval on April 15, 2025. Declining enrollment and an effort to streamline resources has initiated faculty-led curricular revision, whereby the content currently taught in the MS in Telecommunications and Networking degree is being restructured as a new track under the existing MS in Information Technology degree. The new track will be entitled “Telecommunications.”

In accordance with the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures for institutions accredited by the SACSCOC, FIU now seeks approval of its teach-out plan for the MS in Telecommunications and Networking, which includes the following components:

1. ***Provide the closure date, defined by SACSCOC as the date when students are no longer admitted.***

May 12, 2025

2. ***Provide a communication plan to inform all affected parties of the closure to include***

- a. ***How each of the following will be informed for the closure:***

- i. ***Currently enrolled students,***

Currently, four students are enrolled in this program. Via phone and email, the graduate program advisor will communicate individually with each student to develop an appropriate and timely track towards graduation. Students who wish to complete the MS in Telecommunications and Networking degree will be allowed to do until Summer 2026. Students who wish to transfer into the new Telecommunications track (under the MS in Information Technology) will be allowed to do so starting in Fall 2025, the time at which the new track will be launched.

**Office of Academic Planning and Accountability**  
Modesto A. Maidique Campus, PC 112, 11200 SW 8 Street, Miami, FL 33199  
Tel 305-348-1796. Fax 305-348-2322. [apa.fiu.edu](http://apa.fiu.edu)

**ii. *Students with lapsed enrollment (i.e., not currently enrolled but recently enrolled), and***

Via phone or email, the graduate program advisor will attempt to contact students with lapsed enrollment to inform them of the closure. Students with lapsed enrollment who wish to complete the MS in Telecommunications and Networking degree will be given the opportunity to do so until Summer 2026.

**iii. *Prospective students.***

Should prospective applicants inquire about this program, faculty will communicate that students can pursue this field of study as part of the newly restructured MS in Information Technology degree.

**b. *How faculty and staff will be informed, viz., admissions and recruiting / marketing staffs; and***

Faculty in the Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences voted to close the program, and therefore did not need to be informed. Faculty informed staff of the closure.

The Office of Admissions will permanently remove from the institutional admissions portal the option to apply to the MS in Telecommunications and Networking. All proposals for curricular changes (including the proposal to close the MS in Telecommunications and Networking) are posted to the university's curriculum website, to which all faculty and staff have access. Additionally, Faculty Senate motions (including those motions related to approval of curriculum bulletins) are posted publicly on the Faculty Senate website.

**c. *How community or industry partners will be informed. If not applicable, provide an affirmative statement to that effect.***

Not applicable. No community or industry partners will be affected by this closure.

**3. *If the institution is providing options for students to complete at another institution(s), provide copies of all planned communication from the institution and from the teach-out institution(s) related to the closure. All communication must demonstrate the institutions are making accurate statements about students' ability to transfer credits to the teach-out institution(s) and disclose tuition, fees, and other costs at the teach-out institution(s).***

Not applicable. No students need to complete the program at other institutions.

**4. *An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption or additional costs.***

To accommodate current students, FIU plans to allow a 3-semester period for program completion, minimizing disruption in student progression to degree progress. Each student will meet with the graduate program advisor to discuss the degree closure.



Students who wish to remain enrolled in the MS in Telecommunications and Networking will be able to finish their current program of study without additional cost.

5. *An explanation of whether the students subject to the teach-out plan will incur additional charges or other expenses because of the teach-out and, if so, how the students will be notified.*

Not applicable. Students will not incur additional charges or expenses.

6. *Copies of signed teach-out agreements with other institutions, if applicable.*

Not applicable. No copies of teach-out agreements exist.

7. *A description of how faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment.*

Not applicable. No faculty or staff will be terminated as a result of the decision to close the program.

Let me affirm that the closure of the MS in Telecommunications and Networking will have no adverse effect upon FIU students, faculty, or staff. Please contact me should you have questions regarding this substantive change. I look forward to receiving SACSCOC approval of the proposed teach-out plan.

Sincerely,



Jennifer L. Restrepo, PhD, LAT, ATC  
Assistant Vice President for Academic Planning and Accountability  
SACSCOC Liaison

C: Jeanette Nuñez, MPA, Interim President

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April 15, 2025

**Subject: Request for Approval to Seek a New Institutional Accreditor**

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**Proposed Action:**

Florida International University Board of Trustees authorization for the University to seek approval from the United States Department of Education to apply for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.

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**Background Information:**

In the United States, accreditation of entire institutions historically was overseen by accrediting agencies associated with particular regions of the country. Accordingly, as an institution located in the southeastern region of the United States, Florida International University (FIU) is a member of, and has been accredited by, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) since 1974. The SACSCOC most recently reaffirmed FIU's accreditation in December 2021.

In 2020, changes to federal regulation removed the geographic restrictions associated with the accreditation of higher education institutions in the United States. In effect, these regulatory changes offered institutions the opportunity to seek accreditation from a federally recognized accrediting agency outside of a particular geographic region. The Florida Legislature responded to these federal changes in 2022, enacting a law requiring the Board of Governors to “identify and determine accrediting agencies or associations best suited to serve as an accreditor for public postsecondary institutions” (s. 1008.47(2)(a), *2024 Florida Statutes*). The legislation also requires higher education institutions to initiate the process of changing accreditors in the year following either reaffirmation of accreditation or the fifth-year review; according to this legislation, FIU must begin the process of changing accreditors by 2028. Institutions may opt to begin the process earlier.

On August 26, 2022, the Board of Governors determined the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to be the agency best suited to serve as an accreditor for the constituent institutions of the State University System of Florida. Although FIU has not reached its legislatively mandated deadline to begin changing accreditors, university leadership has opted to initiate this transition well before the 2028 deadline. To do so, the FIU Board of Trustees must first provide authorization for the university to pursue membership by another accreditor. Upon receiving this authorization by the FIU Board of Trustees, the university will submit a formal request to the United States Department of Education, indicating the intent to seek accreditation by HLC. This request will describe reasonable cause for the change and provide evidence for how such a change will benefit FIU and its students.

The reasons for seeking HLC accreditation include:

- (1) **Strategic Alignment:** HLC prioritizes student success, seeking to monitor institutional effectiveness relative to student outcomes and institutional success metrics. This focus closely aligns with FIU’s strategic planning processes, both past and present, which emphasize data-driven decision making to achieve established student success, research excellence, and community impact metrics guided by the institution’s mission and vision.
- (2) **Shared Governance:** HLC has a strong shared governance process in which member institutions actively engage in the development and vetting of policies and standards, along with implementation timelines that are well-planned and synchronized with the academic year.
- (3) **Peers:** HLC membership includes more public institutions in the Association of American Universities (AAU) than any other institutional accreditor, and more institutions highly ranked by the *U.S. News and World Report*. This membership composition is better suited to FIU’s status as a top-50 public research university.
- (4) **Membership Support:** HLC displays a strong commitment to supporting member institutions, offering elective programs for knowledge and skill development in higher education professionals. These include multiyear academies designed to facilitate institution-wide change, a credential lab to assist institutions with the development of short-term postsecondary credentials, and ongoing training resources related to processes and procedures. HLC also has been highly responsive to Florida institutions interested in pursuing membership: In 2023, HLC leadership began offering special sessions at its annual meetings—sessions tailored particularly to those institutions seeking accreditation. Furthermore, HLC is the largest institutional accreditor, with a well-established administrative infrastructure and the resources required to accept new members.

If granted approval by the Department of Education, FIU will begin the process of applying for membership in HLC. The anticipated length of time required to fully transition is approximately 24 months, during which time FIU will be required to maintain its accreditation status with SACSCOC. FIU must continue to comply with SACSCOC standards, policies, and processes until HLC confers an initial accreditation status on the institution, and until the Department of Education provides written acknowledgement of this accreditation change.

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<b>Supporting Documentation:</b>	Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 600.11, Special rules regarding institutional accreditation or preaccreditation
	Florida Statute 1008.47, Postsecondary education institution accreditation
	Board of Governors Regulation 3.006 Accreditation

U.S. Department of Education Guidance for Institutions Seeking to Change or Add Accrediting Agencies

U.S. Department of Education Procedures for Institutions Seeking Approval of a Request to Change or Add Accrediting Agencies (Updated Sept. 26, 2022)

Higher Learning Commission Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation, Policy Number INST.B.20.032

Higher Learning Commission Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation, Process Overview

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Elizabeth M. Bejar

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This content is from the eCFR and is authoritative but unofficial.

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## Title 34 — Education

### Subtitle B — Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education

#### Chapter VI — Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education

#### Part 600 — Institutional Eligibility Under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as Amended

##### Subpart A — General

**Source:** 59 FR 22336, Apr. 29, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

**Authority:** 20 U.S.C. 1001, 1002, 1003, 1088, 1091, 1094, 1099b, and 1099c, unless otherwise noted.

**Source:** 53 FR 11210, Apr. 5, 1988, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 600.11 Special rules regarding institutional accreditation or preaccreditation.

(a) *Change of accrediting agencies.*

- (1) For purposes of §§ 600.4(a)(5)(i), 600.5(a)(6), and 600.6(a)(5)(i), the Secretary does not recognize the accreditation or preaccreditation of an otherwise eligible institution if that institution is in the process of changing its accrediting agency, unless the institution provides the following to the Secretary and receives approval:
  - (i) All materials related to its prior accreditation or preaccreditation.
  - (ii) Materials demonstrating reasonable cause for changing its accrediting agency. The Secretary will not determine such cause to be reasonable if the institution—
    - (A) Has had its accreditation withdrawn, revoked, or otherwise terminated for cause during the preceding 24 months, unless such withdrawal, revocation, or termination has been rescinded by the same accrediting agency; or
    - (B) Has been subject to a probation or equivalent, show cause order, or suspension order during the preceding 24 months.
- (2) Notwithstanding paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section, the Secretary may determine the institution's cause for changing its accrediting agency to be reasonable if the agency did not provide the institution its due process rights as defined in § 602.25, the agency applied its standards and criteria inconsistently, or if the adverse action or show cause or suspension order was the result of an agency's failure to respect an institution's stated mission, including religious mission.

- (b) **Multiple accreditation.** The Secretary does not recognize the accreditation or preaccreditation of an otherwise eligible institution if that institution is accredited or preaccredited as an institution by more than one accrediting agency, unless the institution—
- (1) Provides to each such accrediting agency and the Secretary the reasons for that multiple accreditation or preaccreditation;
  - (2) Demonstrates to the Secretary reasonable cause for that multiple accreditation or preaccreditation.
    - (i) The Secretary determines the institution's cause for multiple accreditation to be reasonable unless the institution—

- (A) Has had its accreditation withdrawn, revoked, or otherwise terminated for cause during the preceding 24 months, unless such withdrawal, revocation, or termination has been rescinded by the same accrediting agency; or
  - (B) Has been subject to a probation or equivalent, show cause order, or suspension order during the preceding 24 months.
- (ii) Notwithstanding paragraphs (b)(2)(i)(A) and (B) of this section, the Secretary may determine the institution's cause for seeking multiple accreditation or preaccreditation to be reasonable if the institution's primary interest in seeking multiple accreditation is based on that agency's geographic area, program-area focus, or mission; and
- (3) Designates to the Secretary which agency's accreditation or preaccreditation the institution uses to establish its eligibility under this part.

(c) ***Loss of accreditation or preaccreditation.***

- (1) An institution may not be considered eligible for 24 months after it has had its accreditation or preaccreditation withdrawn, revoked, or otherwise terminated for cause, unless the accrediting agency that took that action rescinds that action.
- (2) An institution may not be considered eligible for 24 months after it has withdrawn voluntarily from its accreditation or preaccreditation status under a show-cause or suspension order issued by an accrediting agency, unless that agency rescinds its order.

(d) ***Religious exception.***

- (1) If an otherwise eligible institution loses its accreditation or preaccreditation, the Secretary considers the institution to be accredited or preaccredited for purposes of complying with the provisions of §§ 600.4, 600.5, and 600.6 if the Secretary determines that its loss of accreditation or preaccreditation—
  - (i) Is related to the religious mission or affiliation of the institution; and
  - (ii) Is not related to its failure to satisfy the accrediting agency's standards.
- (2) If the Secretary considers an unaccredited institution to be accredited or preaccredited under the provisions of paragraph (d)(1) of this section, the Secretary will consider that unaccredited institution to be accredited or preaccredited for a period sufficient to allow the institution to obtain alternative accreditation or preaccreditation, except that period may not exceed 18 months.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1099b)

[59 FR 22336, Apr. 29, 1994, as amended at 85 FR 58916, Nov. 1, 2019]



Select Year: 2024 ▾ Go

## The 2024 Florida Statutes (including 2025 Special Session C)

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[Title XLVIII](#)[Chapter 1008](#)[View Entire Chapter](#)

## EARLY LEARNING-20 EDUCATION CODE ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**1008.47 Postsecondary education institution accreditation.—**

(1) **DEFINITION.**—As used in this section, the term “postsecondary education institution” means a Florida College System institution, state university, or nonpublic postsecondary education institution that receives state funds.

(2) **ACCREDITATION.**—

(a) By September 1, 2022, the Board of Governors or the State Board of Education, as applicable, shall identify and determine the accrediting agencies or associations best suited to serve as an accreditor for public postsecondary institutions. Such accrediting agencies or associations must be recognized by the database created and maintained by the United States Department of Education. In the year following reaffirmation or fifth-year review by its accrediting agencies or associations, each public postsecondary institution must seek and obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency or association identified by the Board of Governors or State Board of Education, respectively, before its next reaffirmation or fifth-year review date. The requirements in this section are limited to a one-time change in accreditation. The requirements of this subsection are not applicable to those professional, graduate, departmental, or certificate programs at public postsecondary institutions that have specific accreditation requirements or best practices, including, but not limited to, law, pharmacy, engineering, or other similarly situated educational programs.

(b) Once a public postsecondary institution is required to seek and obtain accreditation from an agency or association identified pursuant to paragraph (a), the institution shall seek accreditation from a regional accrediting agency or association and provide quarterly reports of its progress to the Board of Governors or State Board of Education, as applicable. If each regional accreditation agency or association identified pursuant to paragraph (a) has refused to grant candidacy status to an institution, the institution must seek and obtain accreditation from any accrediting agency or association that is different from its current accrediting agency or association and is recognized by the database created and maintained by the United States Department of Education. If a public postsecondary institution is not granted candidacy status before its next reaffirmation or fifth-year review date, the institution may remain with its current accrediting agency or association.

(c) This subsection expires December 31, 2032.

(3) **PROHIBITION.**—An accrediting agency or association may not compel any public postsecondary institution to violate state law, and any adverse action upon the institution based upon the institution’s compliance with state law constitutes a violation of this section that may be enforced through subsection (4), except to the extent that state law is preempted by a federal law that recognizes the necessity of the accreditation standard or requirement.

(4) **CAUSE OF ACTION.**—A postsecondary education institution negatively impacted by retaliatory or adverse action taken against the postsecondary education institution by an accrediting agency or association may bring an action against the accrediting agency or association in a court of competent jurisdiction and may obtain liquidated damages in the amount of federal financial aid received by the postsecondary education institution, court costs, and reasonable attorney fees.

(5) **EXPIRATION.**—This section expires December 31, 2032.

**History.**—s. 4, ch. 2022-70; s. 171, ch. 2023-8; s. 11, ch. 2023-82.

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### **3.006 Accreditation.**

- (1) Each university board of trustees shall develop policies on accreditation that are consistent with the institution's mission and Board of Governors' guidelines.
- (2) Institutional Accreditation
  - (a) Consistent with section 1008.47, Florida Statutes, each institution shall seek and take action to establish and maintain institutional accreditation with an agency or association recognized by the United States Department of Education.
  - (b) Each president shall inform the Chancellor within ten business days upon verbal or written notification of any concern, scheduled visit, or any action taken by the institution's accrediting agency or association related to the institution's compliance certification or interim report.
  - (c) Each institution shall provide a copy of the certification letter for initial accreditation or accreditation reaffirmation to the Board of Governors immediately upon receipt from the accrediting agency or association.
  - (d) Upon request, an institution shall provide the Board of Governors' office with a copy of any institution's response to its accrediting agency or association.
- (3) Discipline-Specific Accreditation
  - (a) Each institution is encouraged to seek and take action to maintain national or discipline-specific accreditation for its colleges, schools, and academic programs for which there are established standards for programmatic accreditation.
  - (b) Discipline-specific accreditation is required for academic programs in which graduation from an accredited program is a prerequisite to achieving licensure or certification for professional practice.
  - (c) Each institution must provide notification to the university board of trustees and the Chancellor within ten business days when an accredited academic program is placed on warning or probation or when the accreditation status is revoked by a discipline-specific accrediting body. The notification must include a report of any adverse accreditation findings provided by the discipline-specific accrediting body that outlines the basis for the change in accreditation status.

Authority: Section 7(d), Art. IX, Fla. Const., Section 1008.47, Florida Statutes; History—Formerly 6C-2.57 and 6C-3.06, 11-18-70, 12-17-74, 8-11-85, Amended and Renumbered 1-29-09, Amended 1-22-15, 1-25-23.

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# Federal Student Aid

An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Published on <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-07-19/guidance-institutions-seeking-change-or-add-accrediting-agencies>

PUBLICATION DATE: July 19, 2022

DCL ID: GEN-22-10


SUBJECT: Guidance for Institutions Seeking to Change or Add Accrediting Agencies

**SUMMARY:** The Department has recently received several inquiries regarding the standards and procedures for an institution seeking to change its primary accrediting agency or obtain multiple accreditations. The purpose of this announcement is to reiterate the statutory and regulatory standards and to provide examples of factors Federal Student Aid (FSA) may consider in determining whether an institution has provided sufficient materials demonstrating reasonable cause for changing or adding an accrediting agency.

Please note that companion [DCL ID GEN-22-11, dated July 19, 2022](#), describes the procedures institutions must follow to change or add an accrediting agency.


Dear Colleague:

Under section 496(h) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1099b(h)), an institution seeking to change its accrediting agency must submit to FSA all materials relating to the prior accreditation and materials demonstrating reasonable cause for changing the accrediting agency. This requirement helps prevent an erosion of accrediting agency standards and provides critical protections for students and taxpayers by ensuring that institutions do not switch accrediting agencies simply to evade accountability, avoid open inquiries, or seek approval from an agency with less rigorous or easier-to-meet standards.



The Department has implemented this statutory requirement via [34 CFR § 600.11\(a\)](#) , which requires an institution to provide all materials related to its prior accreditation or preaccreditation, to provide materials demonstrating reasonable cause for changing its accrediting agency, and to receive the Department's approval prior to switching accrediting agencies. In this announcement, the Department is further detailing its expectations and requirements to ensure that institutions are aware of the standards to which they will be held if they seek to change their accrediting agency-of-record with FSA and/or maintain accreditation with multiple institutional agencies. We remind institutions that, in evaluating an institution's demonstration of reasonable cause for doing so, the Department will consider the institution's history of compliance, past accrediting agency actions, open inquiries, and the rationale provided, as described further in this guidance.

## Reasonable Cause

To carry out its responsibilities under [34 CFR § 600.11](#) , FSA must make a reasonable cause determination.


Under [§ 600.11](#) (a) and (b), except in the circumstances described in the following paragraph, FSA will **not** determine an institution's cause to be reasonable if the institution:



- Has had its accreditation withdrawn, revoked, or otherwise terminated for cause during the preceding 24 months, unless such withdrawal, revocation, or termination has been rescinded by the same accrediting agency.
- Has been subject to a probation or equivalent, show cause order, or suspension order during the preceding 24 months.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, under [34 CFR § 600.11](#) , FSA may determine the institution's cause for changing its accrediting agency to be reasonable under such circumstances if the existing agency did not provide the institution its due process rights as defined in [34 CFR § 602.25](#) , the agency applied its standards and criteria inconsistently, or if the adverse action or show cause or suspension order was the result of an agency's failure to respect an institution's stated mission, including religious mission. Further, FSA may determine the institution's cause for seeking multiple accreditations to be reasonable if the institution's primary interest in seeking multiple accreditations is based on its geographic area, program area focus, or mission.

In all other cases, in making a reasonable cause determination, FSA must review the specific circumstances of the institution, which may include the institution's past history of compliance with the requirements of its accrediting agency, the Department, or other oversight agencies; the institution's financial stability; and other information about the institution available to FSA. FSA


may consider factors such as the following when evaluating a proposed change in accrediting agencies (or an application to have more than one institutional accrediting agency):

1. The institution's stated reason for the proposed change or multiple accreditations.
2. Whether the institution is seeking to change accrediting agencies or multiple accreditations to lessen oversight or rigor, evade inquiries or sanctions, or the risk of inquiries or sanctions by its existing accrediting agency.
3. Whether the proposed change of agencies or multiple accreditations would strengthen institutional quality.
4. Whether the institution is seeking to change agencies or seeking multiple accreditations because the new agency and its standards are more closely aligned with the institution's mission than the current accrediting agency.
5. Whether the proposed change or addition involves an accrediting agency that has been subject to Department action.
6. Whether, if ultimately approved by the Department and the accrediting agency, the institution's membership in the accrediting agency would be voluntary, as required for recognition of the accrediting agency under [34 CFR § 602.14\(a\)](#) .

The Department sent a letter to federally recognized institutional accrediting agencies further detailing the significance of voluntary membership in accrediting decisions as required under [34 CFR § 602.14\(a\)](#) . That letter is available at the Office of Postsecondary Education's [website](#) .

As part of its reasonable cause determination, FSA may request records from the institution's current accrediting agency. In all cases, it is incumbent on the institution to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the reasonableness of the requested change.

## Contact Information

For more information, please contact the Department at [CaseTeams@ed.gov](mailto:CaseTeams@ed.gov) .

Sincerely,

Annmarie Weisman  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Innovation  
Office of Postsecondary Education



# Federal Student Aid

An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Published on <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-07-19/procedures-institutions-seeking-approval-request-change-or-add-accrediting-agencies-updated-sept-26-2022>

PUBLICATION DATE: July 19, 2022

DCL ID: GEN-22-11

SUBJECT: Procedures for Institutions Seeking Approval of a Request to Change or Add Accrediting Agencies (Updated Sept. 26, 2022)

SUMMARY: This letter provides guidance on the process institutions must follow that are seeking to change primary accrediting agencies or that are adding multiple accrediting agencies.



## Note

On Sept. 26, 2022, we updated the numbered list in the third paragraph of this Dear Colleague Letter to provide additional guidance regarding the information an institution needs to submit to the School Participation Division for its initial request to change accrediting agencies before the institution submits an application to the new agency. The School Participation Division may also request additional documents or information to complete its review.




Please note that companion [DCL ID GEN-22-10, dated July 19, 2022](#), describes the policy guidance institutions must follow to change or add an accrediting agency.

Dear Colleague:

In a previous [Electronic Announcement](#) published Aug. 5, 2016, the Department reminded institutions of the requirements for seeking FSA approval of a change of primary accrediting agency, including the documentation an institution must submit to FSA in support of a request to change a primary accrediting agency. The Department also specified the procedures for submitting such documentation. This communication updates the procedures for submitting documentation to change or add an accrediting agency by requiring an institution to submit the required documentation to the Department **prior to** submitting an application to a new accrediting agency. Accordingly, this communication revokes and supersedes the Aug. 5, 2016, announcement. To the extent institutions have begun the process of changing or adding an accrediting agency and relied on the 2016 EA, they must immediately inform the Department consistent with the procedures described below.

Under [34 CFR § 600.11\(a\)](#)  and [\(b\)](#) , respectively, the Secretary does “not recognize the accreditation or preaccreditation” of an institution “that is **in the process** of changing accrediting agencies” or that is accredited or preaccredited “by more than one accrediting agency” unless the institution provides the Department information demonstrating “reasonable cause” for changing or adding accrediting agencies and receives Department approval. Therefore, to ensure that an institution maintains recognition of its accreditation or preaccreditation under 34 CFR § 600.11, an institution must provide the required information and obtain the Department’s approval **prior to** submitting an application to a new accrediting agency. We believe that these procedures are in better alignment with the requirements of 34 CFR § 600.11, will provide clarity to institutions and afford them earlier information about Department approval, and will help protect institutions from an inadvertent loss of Title IV eligibility.

Accordingly, an institution must take the following steps to change its primary accrediting agency or add a new accrediting agency:

1. **Prior to submitting an application to the new accrediting agency**, an institution must notify FSA in writing of its intent to change its primary accrediting agency or add a new accrediting agency. With its notification, the institution must submit to FSA documentation of its current accreditation and materials demonstrating reasonable cause for changing or adding an accrediting agency. Institutions should submit this notification and required documentation via email to [CaseTeams@ed.gov](mailto:CaseTeams@ed.gov)  with a subject line “Notification Regarding Accreditation.” An institution should include with this notification the materials required by [34 CFR 600.11\(a\)\(1\)](#) , for a change of primary accrediting agency or [34 CFR 600.11\(b\)\(1\) through \(3\)](#) , for multiple accrediting agencies, including a cover letter that includes the following:
  - a. The name of the institution’s current primary accrediting agency and the name of the institution’s proposed new

agency;


- b. Whether the institution is seeking to change primary accrediting agencies or seeking multiple accreditation;
- c. If the institution is seeking multiple accreditation, whether the institution plans to relinquish accreditation by its current primary accrediting agency and, if so, the timeframe for relinquishment;
- d. The date that the institution's current accreditation is set to expire;
- e. The reason(s) the institution is seeking the change;
- f. If applicable, an explanation of how the institution believes the new agency would strengthen institutional quality; and
- g. If applicable, how the new agency's standards are more closely aligned with the institution's mission.

The institution must also provide supporting materials demonstrating reasonable cause for the change, including documentation to support the institution's claim that it has reasonable cause to change accrediting agencies (or have multiple accrediting agencies).

The institution must include the following documentation from its current primary accrediting agency:


- a. Most recent determination letter;
- b. Documentation that the institution remains in good standing since the determination letter; and
- c. Any substantive correspondence or other communications with the agency relating to the institution's accreditation status, requests for information, or inquiries since the most recent determination letter.

Finally, the institution must provide any substantive correspondence or other communications with the new accrediting agency, including any substantive correspondence or other communications with the agency relating to the institution's planned application. Note that non-substantive communications — such as routine scheduling — do not need to be provided.

2. Prior to submitting its application to the new accrediting agency, the institution must receive notification from FSA that the institution (a) has provided all the required documentation, (b) has demonstrated reasonable cause for changing its primary accrediting agency or for maintaining accreditation by multiple agencies, and (c) has the Department's approval under [34 CFR 600.11](#) .
3. Once the institution has received the notification from FSA described in Step 2 and has **secured new accreditation** (or, for nonprofit or public institutions, preaccreditation by an agency that is recognized by the Department to grant preaccreditation status), it must formally notify FSA of the new accreditation in the online electronic application (E-App) and update the "primary accreditor" indicator if it is changing. The institution should include documentation of its accreditation or preaccreditation by the new agency as part of the supporting information it provides to FSA through the E-App process. The institution must also submit a copy of the notification that it received from FSA in response to the first step of these procedures. The institution was required to receive this notification before submitting an application to the new accrediting agency.

An institution should not drop its association with its current accrediting agency until after (a) the Department has approved the institution's request to change its primary accrediting agency or add an accrediting agency, (b) the new agency has granted accreditation to the institution, and (c) the Department has provided written notice that it acknowledges the new accrediting agency as the institution's primary accrediting agency or the multiple accreditations. Failure to comply with these procedures may result in the institution's accreditation status not being recognized by the Secretary and could result in a loss of Title IV eligibility.

## Contact Information

For more information, please contact the Department at [CaseTeams@ed.gov](mailto:CaseTeams@ed.gov) .

Sincerely,

Richard Cordray  
Chief Operating Officer  
Federal Student Aid



INST.B.20.032

## Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation

In some instances, institutions that meet the qualifications listed below may be eligible to apply for initial accreditation through an accelerated process.

The accelerated process is distinct from HLC's other processes for seeking accreditation. An institution participating in an accelerated process does not participate in the Eligibility Process. The institution does not hold candidacy status, and thus does not hold any status with HLC, prior to being granted initial accreditation.

### Qualifications to Apply for Initial Accreditation Through the Accelerated Process

An institution must meet all of the following qualifications in order to apply for initial accreditation through the accelerated process:

1. The institution is currently institutionally accredited (a) by an accreditor that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and that is historically known as a regional accreditor or (b) by a state entity that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an institutional accreditor of degree-granting institutions of higher education.
2. The institution, in its current form, has undergone one reaffirmation of accreditation with its current institutional accreditor. If an institution has not, in its current form, undergone one reaffirmation of accreditation with its current institutional accreditor, the institution must be able to demonstrate other indicia of continuity and stability in its accreditation history.
3. The institution has not been placed on a sanction, Show-Cause Order, or other similar negative action with its current institutional accreditor for at least the past five years, and its current institutional accreditor is not currently considering placing the institution on a sanction, Show-Cause Order, or other similar negative action.

Notwithstanding any institution's ability to meet the above qualifications, nothing in HLC policy nor federal regulations requires HLC to consider any non-member institution for initial accreditation, whether through the Accelerated Process or through the Eligibility Process.

### Application for Initial Accreditation Through the Accelerated Process

An institution that meets the qualifications above may apply for initial accreditation through the accelerated process. As part of the application process, an institution will be required to demonstrate through a peer review process that it meets the qualifications for participating in the accelerated process, and that it otherwise preliminarily meets HLC's requirements, including the Eligibility Requirements. Peer reviewers participating in the initial phases of the accelerated process may be Eligibility Reviewers chosen by the Board of Trustees, or other peer reviewers.

As part of the application process, HLC may also require that the institution participate in educational activities designed to familiarize the institution with HLC requirements, policies and procedures.

### **Comprehensive Evaluation for Initial Accreditation Through the Accelerated Process**

If peer reviewers determine that the institution is eligible to proceed with the accelerated process, the institution will participate in a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation. This process will include the institution completing an Assurance Argument and undergoing an on-site visit by peer reviewers. The institution will be required to demonstrate, as detailed below, that it meets HLC's Eligibility Requirements, Assumed Practices, Criteria for Accreditation, and Federal Compliance requirements.

### **Decision Making for Initial Accreditation Through the Accelerated Process**

Consistent with HLC policies, only the Board of Trustees may grant initial accreditation, including following an accelerated process. An institution participating in the accelerated process will also participate in an Institutional Actions Council (IAC) hearing prior to Board action. Prior to being granted initial accreditation following the accelerated process, the institution does not hold any status with HLC.

### **Evaluative Framework for Initial Accreditation Through the Accelerated Process**

The requirements for granting initial accreditation following the accelerated process are as follows:

1. The institution meets each of the Eligibility Requirements.
2. The institution meets each of the Assumed Practices.
3. The institution meets or meets with concerns the Criteria for Accreditation.
4. The institution meets the Federal Compliance Requirements.

If the Board of Trustees grants initial accreditation following the accelerated process, the Board may, in its discretion, grant such initial accreditation subject to interim monitoring, restrictions on institutional growth or substantive change, or other contingencies.

If the Board of Trustees denies initial accreditation following the accelerated process, the institution may choose to re-apply to participate in the accelerated process. Prior to re-applying, the institution must take

steps to remedy the underlying circumstances that led to the denial of initial accreditation. Alternatively, an institution may also choose to proceed with applying for status with HLC through the Eligibility Process. If the Board of Trustees does not grant initial accreditation following the accelerated process, the Board of Trustees will inform the institution as to the earliest date it will consider any new application for initial accreditation through the accelerated process, subject to timeframes in HLC policies.

Denial of initial accreditation following an accelerated initial accreditation policy is an adverse action that is subject to appeal.

## Policy Number Key

*Section INST: Institutional Processes*

*Chapter B: Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Membership*

*Part 20: Becoming and Defining a Member Institution*

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*Last Revised: November 2023*

*First Adopted: June 2021*

*Revision History: February 2022, November 2023*

*Notes:*

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# Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation Process Overview

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# Basic Information

The Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation features a reduced timeline to achieving accreditation while still assuring rigor and protection for student success. The process is only available to institutions that meet certain qualifications prior to and throughout the process. This includes being currently accredited by a historically regional accreditor or a state entity recognized by the USDE as an institutional accreditor, and being in good standing with that accreditor. Institutions that do not meet the qualifications for the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation may pursue accreditation through HLC's traditional [Eligibility Process](#).

An institution undertaking the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation must complete all of the steps in the process within the time frames prescribed; must adhere to HLC guidelines related to each step, including guidelines related to the submission of documents; and must receive a positive decision by HLC before moving to each next step.

**Institutions participating in the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation do not hold any status with HLC until awarded initial accreditation.**

An institution must adhere to HLC's guidelines regarding public statements about the fact that the institution is seeking accreditation.

Fees apply at a number of steps throughout the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation. A complete list of these fees can be found in the current [HLC Dues and Fees Schedule](#). Where applicable, fees must accompany the submission of materials or are due at the start of a step in the process. An institution will not be permitted to proceed in the process until the required fees are received.

If at any point in the process the institution misses a required deadline, voluntarily withdraws from the process, or fails to achieve the next step in the process, the institution must start from the beginning of the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation. As detailed in HLC policy, an institution that completes the process but is denied initial accreditation by the HLC Board of Trustees may reapply to participate in the accelerated process after taking steps to remedy the circumstances that led to the denial of initial accreditation, or may elect to pursue membership through HLC's traditional [Eligibility Process](#). The institution must generally wait one year before pursuing either process, unless the HLC Board has provided otherwise.

At various steps in the process, the institution will be asked to provide an institutional response to recommendations, as provided in HLC policy. Additionally, certain determinations within the process are subject to appeal, as provided in HLC policy.

The content in this document is supplemental to HLC policy. Institutions should familiarize themselves with applicable HLC policies as they proceed through the process. Institutions should also familiarize themselves with the [HLC Glossary](#). Many terms in this document are defined in HLC policy or the Glossary.

HLC will maintain all documents submitted by institutions in accordance with applicable HLC policies.

## Maintaining Relationship With Current Accreditor

HLC expects institutions participating in the Accelerated Process for Seeking Initial Accreditation to adhere to all of their current institutional accrediting agency's requirements throughout the process of seeking accreditation with HLC.

This includes adhering to requirements regarding substantive change. Institutions must keep HLC informed about all substantive changes in process and anticipated while seeking accreditation with HLC so that HLC can track all such changes in the institution's records.

All substantive changes requiring approval should be timed so as to have final approval by the original accreditation agency prior to the award of Initial Accreditation by HLC. Significant changes undertaken and not made known to HLC in advance may result in cancellation of any scheduled aspect of the process and may require that the institution restart the accelerated process for initial accreditation.

## Sharing Information About Seeking Accreditation With HLC

As applicable, the institution maintains responsibility for keeping entities such as state higher education agencies, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and, if applicable, other accreditors informed throughout the process.

To ensure that students and other stakeholders have a clear understanding of an institution's accreditation status, HLC requires that institutions follow guidelines

when publicly discussing their accreditation status and plans. After an institution that is participating in HLC’s Accelerated Process for Seeking Accreditation has submitted its application to HLC, it may publicly disclose that it has done so and may indicate a general timeline for the process. The institution should refer others to [HLC’s website](#) for a consistent description of the process and should not speculate as to the outcome. Institutions participating in HLC’s Accelerated Process for Seeking Initial Accreditation are, by definition, concurrently accredited by another institutional accreditor and should be transparent about that accreditation status.

HLC may indicate publicly that an institution participating in the Accelerated Process for Seeking Accreditation has applied, but will generally not provide additional details about the institution’s participation in the process unless the institution is no longer seeking accreditation with HLC or as otherwise consistent with HLC policy.

Questions

Questions about the process may be directed to [seekingaccreditation@hlcommission.org](mailto:seekingaccreditation@hlcommission.org). Institutions are encouraged to attend applicable programming, for example at HLC’s [annual conference](#), before beginning the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation.

Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation

The Process at a Glance

The following chart summarizes the three main steps involved in the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation. Additional information regarding each of the tasks immediately follows the chart.

Step and Associated Activities	Time Frame
<p><b>1. Application</b></p> <p>An institution begins the accelerated process for initial accreditation by submitting an application along with required Accelerated Process Application Evidence to demonstrate that it meets the qualifications for the process and that it meets other specific HLC requirements.</p> <p>HLC staff assess the institution’s application to determine whether the institution meets the qualifications for the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation and whether it can demonstrate that it has certain essential characteristics that would make it eligible for HLC membership. This includes the opportunity for interaction with HLC staff through a combination of email, phone, or video-enabled conversations as needed.</p> <p>This step culminates in a decision regarding whether the institution may proceed to the preliminary peer review.</p> <p><i>See page 5 for further details.</i></p>	<p>HLC staff will review the application and respond to the institution, typically within one month.</p>

Step and Associated Activities	Time Frame
<p><b>2. Preliminary Peer Review</b></p> <p>The preliminary peer review includes the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abbreviated Assurance Filing demonstrating that the institution has provided sufficient narrative and evidence regarding each of HLC's Criteria for Accreditation to proceed</li> <li>• Institutional Data Form</li> <li>• Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form</li> <li>• Compliance With Assumed Practices Form</li> </ul> <p>Peer reviewers preliminarily evaluate the narrative and evidence provided by the institution. There is no in-person visit or other interaction between the institution and peer reviewers.</p> <p>This step culminates in a decision regarding whether the institution may proceed to a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation. If the institution continues, it is assigned an HLC staff liaison at the conclusion of this step.</p> <p><i>See page 6 for further details.</i></p>	<p>HLC anticipates that institutions will prepare and submit the required narrative and evidence within approximately three months following HLC's response to the institution's application (step 1).</p> <p>Institutions must submit these materials within no more than one year following HLC's response to the institution's application.</p> <p>Upon submission of materials required for the preliminary peer review, the peer review panel takes approximately one month to evaluate the materials and determine the institution's ability to continue with the process.</p>
<p><b>3. Comprehensive Evaluation for Initial Accreditation</b></p> <p>The institution submits its comprehensive evaluation materials and hosts an on-site visit by a peer review team. The evaluation includes the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Assurance Filing demonstrating the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and all Core Components</li> <li>• Institutional Data Form</li> <li>• Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form</li> <li>• Compliance With Assumed Practices Form</li> <li>• Federal Compliance Filing</li> <li>• On-site visit, including if applicable, a Multi-Campus Visit</li> <li>• Student Opinion Survey</li> <li>• Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing</li> <li>• HLC Board decision</li> </ul> <p><i>See page 7 for further details.</i></p>	<p>Institutions should prepare for a comprehensive evaluation within approximately nine months after being informed by HLC that the institution may do so and must undergo the comprehensive evaluation within no more than one year from that time.</p> <p>Visit timing will be coordinated with the institution to proceed on as accelerated a timeline as the institution desires, and as is practical, inclusive of the timing for the necessary IAC Hearing and Board meeting where the Board will consider the institution for initial accreditation.</p>

The following sections provide more detailed information for the tasks summarized in the chart above.



# 1. Application

The Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation begins with an institution submitting an [application](#) and providing the required application fee. An institution's application will not be considered complete until the application fee is received. For institutions successful in proceeding through the preliminary peer review, this fee will be credited toward the institution's fee for the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation. See HLC's [Dues and Fees Schedule](#) and the payment information on page 8 of this document for more information.

## Accelerated Process Application Evidence

The institution's application will include documentation demonstrating that the institution meets the qualifications to participate in the accelerated process, as well as other specific HLC requirements. The Accelerated Process Application Evidence must be submitted through the application form as a single PDF file labeled with the file name: (name of institution) ApplicationEvidence.pdf. It should include the following:

1. All official communications between the institution and its current institutional accreditor for the previous 12 months. This includes, but is not limited to: action letters, other official correspondence, reports submitted by the institution, evaluations and other analyses from the accreditor, etc.
2. To the extent not already provided in item 1, documentation showing that the institution, in its current form, is currently institutionally accredited by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the USDE and that is historically known as a regional accreditor, or by a state entity that is recognized by the USDE as an institutional accreditor of degree-granting institutions of higher education.
3. To the extent not already provided in item 1, (a) documentation showing that the institution, in its current form, has undergone one reaffirmation of accreditation with its current institutional accreditor or (b) if an institution has not, in its current form, undergone one reaffirmation of accreditation with its current institutional accreditor, documentation demonstrating other indicia of continuity and stability in the institution's accreditation history.
4. To the extent not already provided in item 1, documentation showing that the institution has not been placed on a sanction, show-cause order,

or other similar negative action with its current institutional accreditor for at least the past five years, and its current institutional accreditor is not currently considering placing the institution on sanction, show-cause order or other similar negative action.

5. Documentation from the United States Department of Education Federal Student Aid office (FSA) indicating that the institution has demonstrated reasonable cause for changing its primary accrediting agency or for maintaining institutional accreditation by multiple agencies and has the approval of FSA under federal regulations to seek accreditation with HLC.
6. A description explaining how the institution's decision to change its primary institutional accrediting agency or to maintain institutional accreditation by multiple agencies is voluntary. Information to be included as part of this explanation could include, but is not limited to (a) the institution's rationale for seeking accreditation with HLC; (b) an analysis of any external factors that are affecting the institution's decision to seek accreditation with HLC; and (c) a description of the institution's decision-making process for choosing to seek accreditation with HLC.
7. Completed [Substantial Presence Worksheet](#).
8. Documentation showing that the institution is incorporated or operating under federal authority within HLC's jurisdiction in accordance with HLC policy.
9. Documentation showing that that institution is legally authorized to award degrees as an institution of higher education in at least one state, sovereign nation or jurisdiction within HLC's jurisdiction in accordance with HLC policy and, if applicable, documentation of authorization in good standing to award degrees as an institution of higher education in any other location in which it is required by state law or regulation to be authorized.
10. A list of all educational programs that the institution offers, including information about which programs are offered by distance or correspondence education.
11. Information about current enrollments in all educational programs shown by program, location and mode of delivery.

- 12.** Inventory of current relationships with other recognized accreditors, including status, and information regarding any of the following circumstances in the last two years:
- Sanction, Show-Cause Order or other similar negative action with any recognized accreditor or state authorizing agency.
  - Adverse action (withdrawal, suspension, denial or termination) with any recognized accreditor or state authorizing agency.
  - Voluntary resignation of status with any recognized accreditor or state authorizing agency while subject to (a.) or (b.) or while any circumstances that would give rise to (a.) or (b.) were pending.
  - pending circumstances that would give rise to (a.) or (b.).
- 13.** Documentation indicating that the governing board of the institution has authorized the institution to seek accreditation with HLC.

After the institution submits the application and the application fee, HLC staff evaluate the institution's application and evidence to determine whether the institution meets the qualifications for the accelerated process and can demonstrate that it has certain essential characteristics that would make it eligible for HLC membership, as noted in HLC policy. Throughout this period, the institution has access to HLC staff for consultation through a combination of email, phone or video-enabled conversations as needed.

This step concludes with a decision on whether or not the institution may move to the next step, preliminary peer review. This decision is final.

## 2. Preliminary Peer Review

HLC anticipates that institutions will prepare and submit the required narrative and evidence for the preliminary peer review within approximately three months following HLC's response to the institution's application (step 1). An institution must submit these materials within no more than one year following HLC's response to the institution's application.

During the preliminary peer review, the institution is provided a site in HLC's online Assurance System, which is where the institution will provide:

- [Institutional Data Form](#)
- [Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form](#)

- [Compliance With Assumed Practices Form](#)
- Assurance Argument with narrative focused only at the Criteria "summary" level (not the Core Component level, which occurs later) and evidentiary documents linked to the narrative for the Criteria

Details on submission requirements for the preliminary peer review can be found in the Required Materials and Submission Procedures on page 7.

A peer review panel evaluates the narrative and evidence provided by the institution. There is no in-person visit or other interaction among the institution and peer reviewers at this step. A fee applies at the beginning of this step; see [HLC's Dues and Fees Schedule](#) for more information.

Once the institution has submitted the materials required for the preliminary peer review, the peer review panel takes approximately four weeks to evaluate the materials and determine the institution's ability to continue with the process.

The preliminary peer review is focused on whether there is sufficient evidence such that the institution appears likely to meet HLC requirements and is sufficiently prepared to host a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation. In some cases, peer reviewers may request additional information for relatively small issues or when an obviously missing item of information is needed.

The preliminary peer review concludes with a determination that either (1) authorizes the institution to move to the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation; or (2) indicates that the institution may not move forward with the accelerated process for initial accreditation. This is a final decision and is not considered an appealable adverse action as detailed in HLC policies.

If the institution proceeds with the accelerated process for initial accreditation, HLC will assign the institution an HLC staff liaison at the conclusion of this step. The staff liaison serves as the primary contact for the institution henceforward and as a resource regarding HLC policies and procedures. In addition, the staff liaison also assists the institution through various logistical aspects of reviews, HLC's decision-making process and other HLC processes.

If it is determined that the institution may not move forward with the accelerated process, the institution may choose to proceed by initiating HLC's traditional [Eligibility Process](#).

### 3. Comprehensive Evaluation for Initial Accreditation

Institutions should prepare for and undergo a comprehensive evaluation within approximately nine months after being informed by HLC that the institution may do so, and must undergo the comprehensive evaluation within no more than one year from that time. Timing for the on-site evaluation will be coordinated with the institution to proceed on as accelerated a timeline as the institution desires, and as is practical, inclusive of the timing for the necessary IAC Hearing and the Board meeting where the Board will consider the institution for initial accreditation.

In a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation, an institution must demonstrate evidence that it meets all of the Criteria for Accreditation, including all Core Components. An institution must also demonstrate evidence that it meets the Eligibility Requirements, Assumed Practices and Federal Compliance Requirements. Initial accreditation is achieved through submission of comprehensive evaluation materials, participating in HLC's [Student Opinion Survey](#) process, hosting an on-site evaluation by a peer review team to the institution's main campus and, if applicable, a selection of its branch campuses, participating in a hearing by the IAC and action by the HLC Board of Trustees. Each of these steps of the process is conducted in accordance with HLC policy. Regular fees, for example those related to comprehensive evaluations and IAC hearings, apply throughout this step. See HLC's [HLC Dues and Fees Schedule](#) for more information.

During the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation, the institution will provide:

- Institutional Data Form
- Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form
- Compliance With Assumed Practices Form
- Assurance Argument with narrative focused at Core Component level, and evidentiary documents linked to the narrative
- Federal Compliance Filing
- Multi-Campus Visit Report (if applicable)

Details on submission requirements for the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation can be found in the Required Materials and Submission Procedures on this page. Additional information about the [comprehensive evaluation process](#) is available on HLC's website.

After the comprehensive evaluation, the peer review team's report and recommendation, along with the entire record, will be routed through HLC's decision-making process. This includes review by an IAC Hearing, where team and institutional representatives participate, and action by HLC's Board. As provided in HLC policy, the institution is afforded the opportunity to submit an institutional response following both the team report and the IAC Hearing.

Institutions participating in the Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation must meet all HLC requirements in order to be granted initial accreditation; this may include findings of "met" or "met with concerns" with respect to the Criteria for Accreditation.

If the Board grants initial accreditation, the institution becomes accredited by HLC. Such accreditation may, in the Board's discretion, be subject to interim monitoring, restrictions on institutional growth or substantive change, or other contingencies.

If the Board denies initial accreditation, the institution may reapply to participate in the accelerated process after taking steps to remedy the circumstances that led to the denial of initial accreditation, or may elect to pursue membership through HLC's traditional Eligibility Process. The institution must generally wait one year before pursuing either process, unless the Board has provided otherwise. Denial of accreditation by the Board is an adverse action that is subject to appeal as detailed in HLC's policies.

## Required Materials and Submission Procedures

### General Requirements

#### Content

Submit only the requested documents. If documents are applicable to more than one item in a filing, submit them once and cross-reference appropriately.

- It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that HLC has those documents necessary to provide a complete and accurate understanding of the institution's compliance with HLC's requirements. If the institution has relevant information that has not been specifically requested, it should contact HLC staff for instructions about the appropriateness of submitting the information.

- Unless instructed otherwise, avoid links to websites or other materials outside of the required filing. Thus, links to external materials should offer only supplemental information. **Reviewers are not required to pursue external links.**
- Please review [HLC's guidelines regarding personally identifiable information \(PII\)](#) prior to submitting any materials to HLC.

## File Type and Structure

- Except for the Assurance Argument and associated Evidence File materials, HLC requires that all institutional materials be submitted electronically as regular PDF documents. HLC cannot accept materials submitted in other file formats or as Adobe Acrobat PDF Portfolios.
- Electronic documents should be prepared by an individual with expertise in using appropriate PDF software, such as Adobe Acrobat.
- Ensure that electronic documents are paginated, bookmarked and searchable, with internal document links that allow for ease of movement across chapters, sections and subsections. Include internal document organizational strategies (such as headings or lists of linked documents) that make it easy for the reader to navigate within the electronic document.
- Take steps to minimize the file size of PDF documents. Do not scan printed documents to create a PDF document, as this will result in a document that is large in file size and not text searchable. Only use graphics and pictures if they provide specific evidence. Optimize graphics and pictures to reduce the size of the document. Ensure that software settings are set to create clear text and graphics, yet not make the file size too large.
- Do not apply password protection to PDF documents.

## Submission Procedures

- Documents will be submitted via a file-sharing link or through the Assurance System. Do not send any documents by email to HLC.
- The application fee should be submitted as detailed below. HLC will issue invoices for all other payments. Contact [finance@hlcommission.org](mailto:finance@hlcommission.org) or 312.881.8119 for instructions on submitting a wire/ ACH payment or with other financial inquiries.

The application fee may be submitted by wire/ACH or mailed to:

Higher Learning Commission  
P.O. Box 735331  
Chicago, IL 60673-5331

## General Notes on the Assurance System

HLC's online Assurance System allows institutions to assemble an Assurance Filing and provide any other required forms and materials. The Assurance Filing includes a narrative (Assurance Argument) and supporting evidentiary documents (Evidence File) in a framework built around the Criteria for Accreditation. Institutions use this system to demonstrate their compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and other HLC requirements. Narrative in the Assurance System should be evaluative in nature and substantiated with clear, specific evidence (versus general references to documents that may contain evidence).

Extensive training is available on HLC's website about using the [Assurance System](#) effectively, and HLC staff are available to assist institutions.

All materials for the preliminary peer review and the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation are submitted through the Assurance System. All materials must be submitted to the Assurance System before the institution's lock date. For the preliminary peer review, the lock date will be the start date of the peer review panel's online review. For the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation, the lock date will be four weeks in advance of the peer review team's on-site visit. After the lock date, the institution will may view, but will no longer be able to edit its Assurance Filing at that step of the process.

Peer reviewers will access all materials from the Assurance System.

The Assurance System allows for the institution to upload additional material requested by peer reviewers through an Addendum feature that is activated by the peer reviewers when needed.

The institution should not otherwise provide materials to peer reviewers, as peer reviewers are expected to work from the Assurance System in preparation for and throughout an evaluation.

Additional information about the Assurance System can be found in the [Assurance System Manual](#).

# Required Materials for Preliminary Peer Review

The materials submitted for the preliminary peer review are as follows.

## 1. Institutional Data Form

- This form is completed by the institution to provide basic institutional data.
- Download the Institutional Data Form from the Forms Tab of the Assurance System.
- Complete and upload the form to the Forms Tab of the Assurance System. If including other materials to respond to the data requested by the form, combine all documents (including the form) into a single PDF file before uploading it to the Forms Tab. (Peer reviewers will be able to access the form through the Forms Tab. There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 2. Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form

- This form is completed by the institution to provide information on its compliance with the Eligibility Requirements.
- Download the Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form from the Forms Tab of the Assurance System.
- Complete and upload the form and supporting evidence to the Forms Tab of the Assurance System. (Peer reviewers will be able to access the form through the Forms Tab. There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 3. Compliance With Assumed Practices Form

- This form is completed by the institution to provide information on its compliance with the Assumed Practices.
- Download the Compliance With Assumed Practices Form from the Forms Tab of the Assurance System.
- Complete and upload the form and any supporting documentation to the Forms Tab of the Assurance System. (Peer reviewers will be able to access the form through the Forms Tab. There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 4. Assurance Filing (Introduction, Assurance Argument at the Summary Criteria level and associated Evidence File)

- An overview of institutional history and context is entered in the Introduction Tab of the Assurance System.
- For the preliminary peer review, institutions will provide narrative focused at the Criteria “summary” level (not the Core Component level, which occurs later).
- The word limit for the narrative for the preliminary peer review should be approximately 1,500 words or fewer per Criterion summary.
- Other than specific forms provided by HLC, documents in the Assurance System related to the Assurance Argument are managed through the Evidence File. Materials in the Evidence File must be linked to at least one section of the institutional narrative. Peer reviewers cannot view documents in the Evidence File that are not linked to the narrative.

Access to HLC’s Assurance System during the preliminary peer review not only provides an opportunity for the institution to demonstrate its readiness to host a comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation, but also allows the institution to become acquainted with the Assurance System and to start assembling narrative and evidentiary files for deeper evaluation to occur during the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation, during which the institution will write fully to each Criterion’s Core Components. In this way, the institution may choose to simultaneously complete requirements for the preliminary peer review and begin drafting its fuller narrative as required for the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation.

Although the institution may begin drafting narrative at the Core Component level during the preliminary peer review, peer reviewers will refrain from reviewing anything in the Assurance System at the Core Component level. Reviewers will only review and evaluate the institution’s responses to the five Criteria summaries at this stage.



# Required Materials for Comprehensive Evaluation for Initial Accreditation

The materials submitted for the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation are as follows.

## 1. Institutional Data Form

- This form is completed by the institution to provide basic institutional data.
- Download the Institutional Data Form from the Forms Tab of the Assurance System.
- If the institution chooses to use a previously completed Institutional Data Form, ensure that it is updated appropriately regarding any information that has changed since the original submission, as well as the time frames for which data is requested.
- Complete and upload the form to the Forms Tab of the Assurance System. If including other materials to respond to the data requested by the form, combine all documents (including the form) into a single PDF file before uploading it to the Forms Tab. (Peer reviewers will be able to access the form through the Forms Tab. There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 2. Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form

- This form is completed by the institution to provide information on its compliance with the Eligibility Requirements.
- Download the Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form from the Forms Tab of the Assurance System.
- When updating the Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form, institutions should clearly identify for peer reviewers any items that have been updated since the preliminary peer review and, as needed, include information explaining how the institution continues to meet the Eligibility Requirements despite the noted changes.
- Upload the form in the Forms Tab of the Assurance System. (Peer reviewers will be able to access the form through the Forms Tab. There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 3. Compliance With Assumed Practices Form

- This form is completed by the institution to provide information on its compliance with the Assumed Practices.
- Download the Compliance With Assumed Practices Form from the Forms Tab of the Assurance System.
- When updating the Compliance With Assumed Practices Form, institutions should clearly identify for peer reviewers any items that have been updated in the document since the preliminary peer review and, as needed, include information explaining how the institution continues to meet the Assumed Practices despite the noted changes.
- Upload the form and any supporting documentation to the Forms Tab of the Assurance System. (Peer reviewers will be able to access the form through the Forms Tab. There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 4. **Assurance Filing (Introduction, Assurance Argument at the Core Component level and associated Evidence File)**

- When the preliminary peer review step is complete and HLC notifies the institution that it may proceed, the institution regains full access to its site in the Assurance System and any work it has already completed toward satisfying the requirements of the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation.
- An overview of institutional history and context is entered (or updated) in the Introduction Tab of the Assurance System.
- At this step of the process, institutions will provide a full Assurance Filing, including detailed narrative—complete with linked evidence—regarding all Core Components.
- Because institutions write in detail to every Core Component for the comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation, institutions should focus their efforts on narrative and evidence in those sections, rather than the Criterion summaries. To this end, institutions are encouraged to revise the Criteria summaries that were written for the preliminary peer review so that they are brief and concise (often just a paragraph). This helps ensure that the focus shifts to the Core Components, which are the areas of focus during this step.

- The word limit for the entire Assurance Argument for the comprehensive evaluation is 40,000 words.
- Other than specific forms provided by HLC, documents in the Assurance System related to the Assurance Argument are managed through the Evidence File. Materials in the Evidence File must be linked to at least one section of the institutional narrative. Peer reviewers cannot view documents in the Evidence File that are not linked to the narrative.

## 5. Supplemental Materials:

- Include the following Supplemental Materials as hyperlinks in the Assurance Argument, as described in the [Assurance System Manual](#):
  - All current faculty and staff handbook(s)
  - All current student handbook(s)
  - All current institutional catalog(s) or course bulletin(s)
- Further, include audited financial statements for the two most recent fiscal periods as PDFs

in the Evidence File and provide a link within the Assurance Argument in the applicable Core Component section.

## 6. Federal Compliance Requirements

- Download the Federal Compliance Filing Form from HLC's website.
- Upload the completed Filing Form and related appendix, if required, to the Federal Compliance Tab of the Assurance System. (There is no need to provide a link to this document in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

## 7. Multi-Campus Report (if applicable)

- If the comprehensive evaluation includes a multi-campus visit, prepare a report that addresses each campus being reviewed. See the [Multi-Campus Visit procedure](#) for details on preparing the report.
- Upload the report to the Forms tab of the Assurance System. (There is no need to provide a link to the report in the narrative of the Assurance Argument.)

# Related Policies and Documents

## Policies

[Eligibility Requirements](#) (CRRT.A.10.010)

[Criteria for Accreditation](#) (CRRT.B.10.010)

[Assumed Practices](#) (CRRT.C.10.010)

[Obligations of Membership](#) (CRRT.D.10.010)

[Federal Compliance Requirements](#)

[Jurisdiction](#) (INST.B.10.010)

[Eligibility Process](#) (INST.B.20.010)

[Candidacy and Initial Accreditation](#) (INST.B.20.020)

[Accelerated Process for Initial Accreditation](#)  
(INST.B.20.032)

[Dues and Fees](#) (INST.B.40.010)

[Denial or Withdrawal of Status](#) (INST.E.60.010)

[Reapplication Following a Denial or Withdrawal of Status](#) (INST.E.80.010)

[Appeals](#) (INST.E.90.010)

[Substantive Change](#) (INST.G.10.010)

## Documents

[Substantial Presence Form](#)

[Institutional Data Form](#)

[Compliance With Eligibility Requirements Form](#)

[Compliance With Assumed Practices Form](#)

[Federal Compliance Overview and Filing Form](#)

[Dues and Fees Schedule](#)

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## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REGULAR REPORTS**

- I. Enrollment Management and Services**
- II. Faculty Senate**
- III. Florida International University and Baptist Health South Florida Collaboration**
- IV. Information Technology**
- V. Research and Economic Development / University Graduate School**
- VI. Student Affairs**

## **I. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES**

### **1. University Admissions**

University Admissions has begun its spring recruitment to connect with high school juniors, as well as prospective transfer and graduate students.

In January, FIU participated in a weeklong series of events designed to educate international transfer students on the benefits of an FIU education. The fairs were held in the greater Seattle area and representatives met with international students attending eight (8) different Seattle area community colleges. Many of the colleges are interested in developing formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with FIU to streamline the transfer process. In state, FIU representatives have visited state colleges in central, west and south Florida to meet with transfer students.

On March 9, University Admissions attended the Miami National College Fair where all academic units had a booth and representation. We will also have representatives at the Phi Theta Kappa Transfer Student Honor Society fair in Tampa.

### **2. Transfer and Transition Services (TTS) – March 2025**

TTS has launched a new microsite dedicated to Adult Learners, consolidating essential information and services. Notably, the site features direct links to degree programs that offer Prior Learning Assessment options. The development of this site was partially funded by a grant aimed at supporting adult learners and represents a collaboration between TTS and our colleagues in Credentialing Learning.

On March 13, 2025, FIU hosted Miami Dade College (MDC) for the 27th annual FIU-MDC Day. This event brings together administrators, faculty, and staff to strengthen the many aspects of our enduring partnership, including interinstitutional articulation agreements, FIU Connect4Success, collaborative grants, and curricular alignment across key academic disciplines. It also serves as a platform for discussing strategies to enhance transfer student success. For the first time, we were pleased to welcome Dr. Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), and his leadership team to the event. This presents a valuable opportunity to engage them in discussions about the K-20 pathway and explore new avenues for collaboration to ensure success throughout their entire educational journey.

## **II. FACULTY SENATE**

From January 2025 to March 15, 2025, the Faculty Senate and the Steering Committee of the Faculty Senate met four (4) times. Below are some highlights:

### **January 2025**

- The Faculty Senate approved Curriculum Bulletin 2.
- The Faculty Senate approved the AA-Student Academic Grievance Policy #340.340 and the AA-Student Academic Grievance Procedures.
- The Faculty Get-Together on January 21<sup>st</sup> was sponsored by the Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs.

## **February 2025**

- The Faculty Senate approved the changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws for the Steering Committee (Article V.A.1.a.ii and Nominating Committee- Article V.A.2a.i sections).
- The Faculty Senate approved a Statement in Support of Renewing the University President's Contract.
- The Faculty Senate approved Curriculum Bulletin 3.
- The Faculty Senate approved the following Academic Calendar Shell for the next Academic Year: AY 2026-2027.
- The Steering Committee met with BOT Chair Roger Tovar to discuss the events that led to the change in FIU leadership.
- The Faculty Get-Together on February 21<sup>st</sup> at the AstroScience Center was sponsored by the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing.

## **March 2025**

- The Faculty Senate approved Curriculum Bulletin 4.
- The New UCCOC procedures were presented by the Chair of the University Core Curriculum Oversight Committee.

## **III. FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA COLLABORATION**

### **1. Joint Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs**

Recently, the committee approved the introduction of five (5) new training programs, in Critical Care (2027), Thoracic Surgery (2027), Gastroenterology (2028), Pain Medicine (2029), and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (2029). In addition, the committee approved increases in the complement for three (3) existing programs: Sports Medicine, Neurological Surgery, and Transitional Year. These approved changes are now undergoing the feasibility review process with the Baptist team. The committee also recently submitted an application to the ACGME for a program in Urology set to begin in 2027, is actively working on applications for programs set to begin in 2028 Anesthesiology, Gastroenterology, Neurological Surgery Hospice & Palliative care and continues work on programs in Psychiatry and OB/Gyn. The new Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Neurology, and Diagnostic Radiology programs have completed the match process and will be notified of their matches on March 21st. Residents in Internal Medicine (30), General Surgery (9), and Neurology (4) will begin work on July 1st.

### **2. Joint Research Initiatives**

The committee is actively engaged in recruiting potential PhD candidates for joint research opportunities, with the goal of enhancing collaborative efforts. Recently, six (6) submissions were received for The Irma & Kalman Bass Neuroscience Research Award. The committee is currently in the process of identifying the recipient for the \$50,000 award. In addition, ongoing collaboration with Huron continues as efforts are made to finalize procedures for joint grant submissions, ensuring a streamlined process for future collaborative funding opportunities.

### **3. Clinical ACC Assessment**

The ACC clinic is set to transition to the Baptist Care site on July 1, 2025. In preparation, the delineation of functions for key areas, including security, life safety, IT, and facilities management, has been completed for ACC. Additionally, a Letter of Intent has been presented to lease the MRI currently located in PG5 under ORED by Baptist, facilitating the optimized use of the MRI equipment. Furthermore, Phase 2 of the clinical care expansion, which includes the addition of neurology, physiatry, and orthopedic services for Baptist at the ACC, was presented and has been officially approved. This marks another important milestone in enhancing the services offered.

#### **4. Joint Marketing**

The marketing committee presented the marketing agreement, and it is still pending finalization between the two (2) organizations. In preparation for ACC transition to Baptist Care site, both organizations have approved the ACC exterior mockup, and the interior and wayfinding signage designs are in progress and will be finalized soon. Marketing logos are currently under review by both parties and are expected to be finalized shortly. In addition, a communication plan for Match Day has been developed collaboratively by both teams to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to the event.

#### **5. Medical Center**

The construction of the new medical building is progressing steadily. The conceptual schematics have been completed, and the project is in the process of obtaining approval for these designs. Once approved, the project can move forward into the next phase. A construction manager advertisement has been posted to identify the right professional to oversee the construction, ensuring the project stays on track. Additionally, Hammes Healthcare has been selected to be the project management company to provide project viability on current status based on planning, programming and design.

### **IV. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

#### **1. Enhancing the Student Experience with the Panther Success Hub**

The Division of IT is in the process of completing the implementation of HighPoint. The new student advising application and degree pathway tools will modernize and enhance academic advising, allowing for a more personalized experience. This multi-phase implementation began in the fall of 2023 and consolidated three (3) existing applications into one (1) solution, realizing cost savings for the University over a period of five (5) years. The application includes five (5) modules: Schedule Builder, Degree Planner, Advisee Relationship Management (ARM), Course Auditor, and the Campus Experience module.

The division has completed the implementation of the Schedule Builder module and is near completion of the Degree Planner module (Panther Degree Planner). The ARM module (Panther Success Network) is a phased implementation beginning with a pilot program consisting of advisors and students from all colleges and schools. The expected go-live for the ARM module is near the end of the Spring 2025 semester.

#### **2. Security Identity Manager Migration**

The division recently completed a large-scale migration of its Security Identity Manager to a new, more robust solution. The SailPoint Identity Security Cloud is a comprehensive identity management solution designed to unify and secure digital identities across an organization. It provides a cloud-based platform that simplifies the process of managing user identities, roles, and access to critical applications and data. By leveraging advanced technologies such as AI and machine learning, SailPoint offers proactive risk management, automated workflows, and detailed analytics to ensure that only authorized individuals have access to specific resources. This enables FIU to maintain robust security measures, achieve regulatory compliance, and enhance operational efficiency.

In a large organization such as FIU, the SailPoint Identity Security Cloud is necessary as the University manages thousands of students, faculty, and staff who require access to a myriad of systems and data, from academic records and research databases to administrative functions. Ensuring that the right individuals have the appropriate access while preventing unauthorized access is a complex challenge. This new solution addresses this by providing a scalable and automated solution that can handle the dynamic nature of FIU's user roles and access needs. With this migration, the division and the University

are better able to protect sensitive information, streamline access management, and create a safer and more efficient digital ecosystem for all stakeholders.

### **3. Centralizing FIU's Syllabi with Simple Syllabus**

Simple Syllabus is a vital tool adopted by FIU to further enhance the academic experience. Simple Syllabus is a centralized platform that allows instructors to create, manage, and distribute course syllabi efficiently. By standardizing the format and centralizing the storage of syllabi, it ensures that students can easily access and understand course expectations, schedules, and resources. This tool not only saves time for faculty but also enhances transparency and consistency across the University's academic offerings. The University began using Simple Syllabus in Summer 2023 to comply with the state-mandated UCC syllabus posting requirement. The division is working to increase the usage of Simple Syllabus in all academic courses at the University for Fall 2025.

## **V. RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL**

### **1. External Grant Awards' Performance**

Between December and January of the fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025, the value of awards received increased by 1%, from \$151.6M to \$153M. Among colleges, the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work experienced a 21% increase (from \$10.7M to \$12.9M), the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine had an increase of 3% (\$7.1M to \$7.3M). Among Centers, there was an increase of 2% in awards (\$69.4M to \$70.1M). Centers with notable increases include the Center for Children and Families (35% increase), the International Hurricane Center (169% increase), and the Biomedical Science Institute (119% increase).

During the first 7 months of fiscal year 2024-2025, the distribution of awards received by funding sources changed considerably. Federal government funding accounted for 85% of total awards (same as last fiscal year). State and Local Government accounted for 10% of total awards, compared to 6% last fiscal year, and private/other sources accounted for 5% of awards received (9% last fiscal year). The number and value of proposals submitted during the first 7 months of this fiscal year has decreased. The value decreased by 2% (from \$489.9M to \$477.9M) and the number decreased by 23% (from 744 to 575).

### **2. Innovation and Economic Development**

StartUP FIU supported three (3) faculty teams in preparing grant submissions for the NSF national I-Corps program. One team, led by PI Alicia Boymelgreen, received the national I-Corps grant, while the other two (2) completed the regional I-Corps program. Four (4) additional faculty teams are working on SBIR/STTR submissions, with all seven (7) teams completing StartUP FIU's 12-hour I-Corps pre-training. StartUP FIU has also been building relationships with industry partners, including discussions with Aerovec, helping Dr. Godavarty's team (Biomedical Engineering) with commercialization talks, and exploring investment opportunities with Epidarex Capital. During this period, StartUP FIU hosted two (2) events: "It's Not All About Startups: 3 Ways to Commercialize Your Research" on January 28 with 193 attendees, and Google's session on January 30, which had 36 students. The team mentored 56 students on research and entrepreneurship, and Hacker Nation sessions attracted 68 students. StartUP FIU is also supporting the EDA's South Florida Risk and Resilience Tech Hub, which received 17 requests for demonstration projects, and is assisting Dr. Atorod Azizinamini in launching a new startup based on university technologies.

Between the months of January and February of FY 2024-2025, there were 8 intellectual property disclosures, 7 patent applications submitted, 10 patents granted, and 3 license agreements executed.

### **3. University Graduate School (UGS)**

As of February 28, 2025, FIU received 3,086 applications for Doctoral Programs, an increase of 4% applications over the same time last year. Master's program applications totaled 11,683, a 3.4% decrease (-456), while specialist program applications dropped by 22%, totaling 56. Graduate admissions increased by 6%, to 6,496 students, including an additional 31 Doctoral, 326 masters, and 2 specialist students. The total graduate enrollment increased by 6% to 4,208 students: 501 doctoral candidates (+9%), 3,691 master's students (+6%), and 16 graduates in specialist programs (-6%). Programs with the greatest enrollment growth included Nursing and Health Sciences (Doctoral +30%, master's +17%), CASE (Doctoral +27%, master's +12%), SIPA (+21% mostly in Global Affairs), Public Health (+16%, mostly in Social Work) and Engineering (+7%, mostly in Data Science). UGS launched the Spring 2025 Graduate Writing Mentorship program in collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Writing on January 7. After reviewing 94 applications, 40 students were selected, with 10 students in each of the 4 writing cohorts. The program began on January 14 and has been ongoing for 7 weeks. UGS also held its Spring Orientation on January 14 for 79 incoming graduate students, offering sessions on academic policies, student life, and campus resources. By February's end, 273 students had started the virtual orientation, with 173 completing it. UGS hosted the annual 3MT competition on January 24, attended by 85 participants, showcasing 10 finalists from 7 programs and 5 colleges. The first-place winner will present at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools in Dallas, and the second-place winner will present at the Conference of Florida Graduate Schools in April. UGS opened several fellowship application cycles in January, with 17 applicants for the Dissertation Evidence Acquisition (DEA) program and 49 applicants for the Dissertation Fellowship (DF). The Presidential Fellowship (PF) and Veteran Fellowship (VF) application process concluded by February 20, with 10 PF winners and 1 VF recipient.

UGS continues to support graduate students with various initiatives. The Spring 2025 Undergraduate-to-Graduate Fellows (UtGP) have been awarded, with 7 completing their research and 1 scheduled to complete in Summer 2025. UGS also prepared for the 2025 Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW), closing abstract submissions with 104 applications. The Graduate Annual Doctoral Evaluation was revised slightly, with UGS hosting training sessions for faculty and students across six (6) colleges. UGS organized a pilot reOrientation program on March 13 for over 120 advanced doctoral students, aimed at helping them navigate the post-coursework stage. UGS met with the Graduate Advisory Board (GAB) on January 27 and February 10 to discuss initiatives for graduate students. Workshops for Graduate Program Directors (GPDs) and students graduating in Spring or Summer 2025 were held on January 16 and February 19, including training on the Business Intelligence system with 36 and 25 graduate student attendees and graduate student enrollment services with 47 attendees.

## **VI. STUDENT AFFAIRS**

### **1. FIU models excellence at the National Student Success Conference**

Nearly 20 members of FIU's Student Affairs and Student Success Operations & Integrated Planning teams represented the University as presenters, panelists, and planning committee members at the National Student Success Conference, hosted in February by the Florida Consortium of Metropolitan Research Universities. Highlights of FIU's involvement in the conference include Provost Elizabeth Bejar's participation in a panel discussing the significance of the Consortium during its tenth anniversary year and its impact on participating universities' communities; a presentation by Associate Vice President



for Student Health & Wellness Brenezza Garcia on implementing the dimensions of wellness in student-centered care practices; and a presentation on empowering student success through academic advocacy, coaching, and advising models by Manager of Academic Support Sheryl-Anne Mullings-Black.

## **2. FIU named a champion for first-generation student success**

FIU has been named one (1) of 18 champions of first-generation student success in 2025 by FirstGen Forward, a nationwide initiative by NASPA (the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators) which recognizes institutions for their services and programming dedicated to promoting the achievements of students who are among the first generation in their families to earn a bachelor's degree. Among 429 institutions of higher education nationwide participating in the FirstGen Forward Network, a total of 32 have advanced through the three-stage development process to [the highest echelon, Network Champions](#). FIU is among the second cohort of Network Champions, so designated for their efforts to scale wraparound student services, advance awareness efforts, and contribute to a growing knowledge base of evidence-backed practices and leadership engagement.

## **3. Greek life career fashion show inspires hundreds of budding professionals**

Aligning with the University's goal to prepare students to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce, the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Enrichment partnered with Career and Talent Development, FIU Business Career Management, Cintas, Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity, Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity, FIU Alumni, and the College of Communications, Architecture + the Arts in January to host "From Greek Letter and Paws to Professional Success." The business professional fashion show and career development event was attended by hundreds of students and alumni who are members of the University's Greek organizations, and it provided them the opportunity to participate in mock interviews, have their resume reviewed by professionals, take a professional headshot for LinkedIn, and learn how to dress for success.

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