Governor Crist Commemorates FRAG Thirtieth Anniversary

2009 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Florida Resident Access Grant program. To mark this milestone Governor Charlie Crist issued a recognition proclaiming “the importance of FRAG” and stated, “Students attending and graduating independent colleges and universities add greatly to the economic vitality of Florida and many become the future leaders of our State and nation.” He further celebrated “the tremendous success of FRAG and the assistance that the grant has provided to hundreds of thousands of Floridians”.

ICUF President Ed Moore commented, “The recognition of Governor Crist of this vital program means a lot to the tens of thousands of students and their families who are current participants in this program.” Moore continued, “In these difficult economic times it is important to note how critical the assistance this grant provides is to opening access to success for so many Florida residents.” ICUF is pleased to note this milestone year for this program and to celebrate the role this grant has played in making opportunity possible for so many Floridians.

Eight New ICUF Alumni Elected to Legislature

Among the new members elected to the Legislature in November were eight representatives who attended ICUF institutions. A total of 39 ICUF alumni serve in the Legislature, nearly one in four lawmakers.

“It’s always a pleasure to see graduates of ICUF institutions get involved in public service and helps to emphasize the important contribution our schools make in sustaining leadership in Florida,” said ICUF President Ed H. Moore. “We wish the new members well and look forward to working with them.”

The new legislators and the schools they attended are:

- Rep. Joseph Abruzzo, D-Wellington, Lynn University
- Rep. Eric Eismaugle, R-Orlando, Florida Southern College
- Rep. Scott Plakon, R-Longwood, Stetson University
- Rep. Ronald “Doc” Renuart, R-Ponte Vedra Beach, Nova Southeastern
- Rep. Richard Steinberg, D-Miami Beach, University of Miami
- Rep. James W. “Jim” Waldman, D-Coconut Creek, Nova Southeastern University
Rollins, Miami, Ringling, Tampa Win Campus Compact Awards

The Florida Campus Compact has presented 2008 awards for service learning programs to Rollins College, University of Miami, Ringling College of Art and Design and The University of Tampa.

Gabriel Barreneche of Rollins College won a Service-Learning Faculty Award for “contributing to the integration of service-learning into the curriculum.” Keith Fletcher of the University of Miami won a Community Engagement Educator Award for “significant contributions to the institutionalization of community engagement, inspiring a vision for service on the campus, and supporting faculty, students, and campus-community partnerships.”

Ringling won the iVote Election 2008 Video Contest Award, with the University of Miami winning the Democracy Cup Award. Rollins was runner-up in that category.

Ringling won the Engaged Campus Award with Tampa as runner-up.

Eckerd President Celebrates School’s 50th Anniversary

In a column written for the St. Petersburg Times, Eckerd College President Dr. Donald R. Eastman, III, has celebrated the college’s 50th anniversary by pronouncing the occasion commemorates three things:

“First, our very survival for 50 years; Second, our continual and uninterrupted focus — in good times and bad — on our mission of providing first-rate, innovative, values-based undergraduate education; and Third, the growing strength of our school, in every qualitative and quantitative way, symbolized by the successes so far of our 50th anniversary capital campaign, ‘Many Experiences, One Spirit’: We have already raised $65-million in the “quiet phase” of our campaign.”

Eastman said Eckerd occupies a unique place in Florida’s higher education landscape as a liberal arts college that provides an educational experience many in the south know little about.

“While large universities provide unparalleled training for graduate students and research programs, and community colleges provide an inexpensive option for taking college-level courses, liberal arts colleges provide an intensive undergraduate educational experience that most public colleges simply cannot afford to match (our average cost per student is roughly what an out-of-state student would pay to a state college),” he said.

Eckerd has raised the goal of its capital campaign to $80 million, and the board of Trustees has renewed Eastman’s contract until June 30, 2014.

Florida Tech Gets State Grant for Suborbital Research

The state has awarded a $500,000 grant to the Florida Suborbital Commercial Research and Training Program at Florida Institute of Technology. The program is directed by former astronaut Sam Durrance, a professor of physics and space science.

The program is designed to create new businesses in the suborbital personal spaceflight industry. Sen. Thad Altman, R-Melbourne, was instrumental in obtaining funding for the project.

“This is the type of program that will significantly benefit NASA and the commercial space industry,” he said.
Senator Crist Addresses Saint Leo Students

In a visit to Saint Leo University, Sen. Victor Crist, R-Tampa, told students, faculty and staff that he anticipates the Florida economy will improve after 18 months, but the Legislature will be required to continue spending cuts in the meantime.

Crist warned that Florida’s eight-year term limits law will result in a major turnover of legislators after the 2010 election, when he will be one of many lawmakers forced to give up their seats.

Referring to President-elect Barack Obama’s victory in November and popularity among young voters, Crist told the students, “You are a very powerful force.”

Jacksonville Times Union Clearly States Impact of FRAG on Student Retention

The state's monstrous budget gap has put a fright into the leaders of Florida's colleges and universities. For good reason.

It's a gap that could swallow up the state's future if too many students are cut off from college. Lawmakers recently learned that Florida will be grappling with a $2.3 billion budget deficit this year. That deficit, combined with declining property tax revenues and the continuing losses from stagnant growth and other problems related to the recession and the credit crisis, won't just hobble governments when it comes to providing basic services. It’ll will hurt students' chances to enter the world of higher education.

Of particular worry for the Florida Association of Colleges and Universities, a non-governmental organization that represents all sectors of the state's higher education system, is whether the Florida Resident Access Grant will be cut. The grant, also known as FRAG, is about $3,000 per student. It is available for qualified undergraduates who attend the state's private, non-profit colleges or universities. About 34,000 students receive it.

At schools like Edward Waters College in Jacksonville and Flagler College in St. Augustine, two-thirds or more of their students depend on it. Without FRAG, they might not be able to go to college. Here's why.

The state's public universities are having to cut enrollments because of rising costs - even the smartest, most qualified students are being turned away. Community colleges won't be able to absorb all the overflow without going broke, as well. That means students who attend private colleges won't necessarily be able to turn to public institutions. Also, unlike in the past, the credit crunch has made it difficult for college students to get loans to make up for shortfalls in grant funding. On top of that, plummeting home prices and mass foreclosures have made it hard for them to turn to parents who, in the past, would have been able to take out home equity loans to help them pay for their education.

"If FRAG goes, students will have to either borrow or drop out," Kerry Romesburg, president of Jacksonville University, told members of the Times-Union's Editorial Board. "They can't borrow, so they'll have to drop out."

Said Claudette Williams president of Edward Waters, cutting FRAG grants would "eliminate hope" for a generation of students.

Private colleges, unlike the perception, educate many needy students. They take a load off the packed public colleges in this state. It makes no sense to penalize these students, make it more difficult to attend college, and put the state's future in jeopardy.

The recession and the state's deficit will force lawmakers to make a lot of painful budget decisions.

But when it comes to higher education, they should consider Florida's future - and how any pain they inflict might reverberate for generations.
JU Accepted into Prestigious Business Organization

The Jacksonville University Davis College of Business has been accepted into the Principles for Responsible Management Education Initiative, becoming the only school in Florida so honored.

The PRME Initiative is a global group comprised of more than 160 of the world's leading business schools and organizations. The Initiative was founded by the United Nations Global Compact to foster responsible management education and develop a new generation of business leaders.

“This is an important and distinctive honor for JU to become a PRME member,” said Davis College Dean Dr. Joseph E. McCann. “In the current academic environment, responsible global leadership, corporate social responsibility and economic and environmental sustainability have not yet become embedded in the mainstream of business education.”

UM Launches New Center for Entrepreneurship

Seeking to steer students and alumni into careers as entrepreneurs, the University of Miami has unveiled its Launch Pad, an interdisciplinary entrepreneurship research center, based at the Toppel Career Center.

The Launch Pad makes it clear to students that entrepreneurship is a career choice that can be started right away. In keeping with the launch, the university participated in Global Entrepreneurship Week for the first time.

Barry Combines Founder’s Week with Community Fest

For the first time, Barry University has combined its annual Founder’s Week celebration with a community festival. The event commemorates the founding of Barry 68 years ago.

This year community members were invited to participate as students danced and music groups performed. Students also competed in bed races and a tug-of-war. Miami Shores Mayor Herta Holly joined Barry President Sister Linda Bevilacqua for the traditional cake cutting.
HEFFA Approves New Bond Project for St. Thomas

In December the Higher Education Facilities Finance Authority met at St. Thomas University to approve a project and proposed financial plan to then allow St. Thomas to obtain the Governor Crist's approval, which is necessary for the Authority to issue bonds. Bond proceeds will be used to provide funds to reimburse St. Thomas University for funds previously expended, or to refinance debt associated with the construction and equipping of three buildings on the campus in Miami-Dade County: the Fernandez Family Center for Leadership and Wellness, the Carnival Cruise Lines Science and Technology Building and Villanova Hall, totaling in excess of $38 million.

These buildings include the following: The Science and Technology Building is a $10.1 million, twenty-six thousand square foot building containing classrooms, laboratories, research facilities, and faculty offices. The Center for Leadership & Wellness consists of a $8.7 million, sixty-two thousand square foot wellness center that will house a gymnasium seating about 2,600 for the NCAA Division II men's and women's basketball programs. In addition, the building will contain classrooms, a fitness facility, locker rooms, a racquetball court, offices for the Athletic Director and coaches and food services facilities. Villanova Hall is a residence hall of 37,000 square foot, containing fourteen undergraduate suites and forty-two private rooms for graduate and law students.

Florida Tech Hosting National Preparedness Conference

Imagine a Category 4 hurricane hitting a state capital at the same time as a major terrorist attack. That's what attendees at the second annual conference on National Preparedness, hosted by Florida Institute of Technology did this month.

The simulation is part of a series of presentations and discussions of issues relating to disaster preparedness and response, national and international security, and humanitarian and disaster relief logistics. Speakers at the event include experts from the military, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, FBI and the American Red Cross.

Flagler College Tallahassee Students Take the Prize for Their Parade Entry

Students of the Flagler College-Tallahassee Campus were proud to learn that their hard work and creativity was rewarded with a trophy for the best school entry in the Tallahassee Festival Of Lights Holiday Parade. The theme for this year was “Home For the Holidays”. The Flagler-Tallahassee students designed and then constructed a 25 foot float that included the Flagler Lion mascot sitting in a rocking chair in front of a fireplace with a holiday tree and gifts. A 16 foot sign in the middle of the float that was painted by the students encouraged others to “Come Join the Flagler Family”. Approximately 30 students, faculty, staff, administration and family participated in the parade.

Flagler College- Tallahassee is a University Partner on the Tallahassee Community College campus, offering Bachelors degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Elementary Education and a dual Elementary/Exceptional Student Education. The parade is one of the many efforts Flagler College-Tallahassee undertakes to participate in the Tallahassee community.

Other efforts this year have included sponsoring a team and a hole in the Tallahassee Community College Scholarship fund Golf Tournament, a team of walkers and fundraisers for the Vision Walk for the prevention of blindness, food drives for 2nd Harvest, and adopting of families for the Christmas Connection.
Lynn Breaks Ground for New Performing Arts Center

Lynn University’s dream of a state-of-the-art performing arts center is becoming a realization as ground is broken. The center is named after major donors, Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold. Mrs. Wold contributed $9.3 million toward construction of the center that will bear her name and that of her late husband.

The Wold Center will feature a 750-seat theater featuring performances by the university’s Theater Arts Program and concerts by Conservatory of Music students and faculty members. The center is scheduled to be completed in December 2009.

Florida Southern Student Wins Research Competition

Florida Southern College senior, Alan M. George, recently won first place in the Undergraduate Student Research Contest of the 22nd Annual Southeastern Conference of the Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges.

His project, titled “Using Only Bumper Sensors to Map and Navigate an Environment,” is part of his senior thesis work performed under the direction of Dr. Gwendolyn Walton, FSC Professor of Computer Science.

“We are all very proud of Alan,” Dr. Walton said. “His robotics software research is excellent, and he gave a very professional presentation at the conference. It has been a privilege for me to direct Alan’s undergraduate research and to teach the Florida Southern College computer science students.”

NSU President Named Broward Alliance Chair

Nova Southeastern University President Ray Ferrero, Jr., has been named Chair of the Board of Broward Alliance. The Alliance is Broward County’s official public/private partnership for economic development.

Ferrero and past Chair Kathy Koch presented an update on The Broward Alliance’s strategic three year economic development initiative called "Accelerate Broward" at the organization’s recent meeting.

"We live in one of the best places in the world and we have the infrastructure, educational system, talent, and one of the most favorable business and tax climates in the country for businesses to grow and prosper,” said Ferrero. "We just have to work together to let others know. As a team, and with all that we have put in place, we will do amazing things together. We are truly dealing from a position of strength.”
PBA Receives Grant to Help Uninsured with Medications

The Quantum Foundation has awarded Palm Beach Atlantic University’s Lloyd L. Gregory School of Pharmacy a $20,000 grant to administer the MedData Services Prescription Assistance Program for low-income and uninsured patients.

MedData is a web-based program that provides health care entities and their qualified (low income and uninsured) patients the information needed to apply for free medications. The University’s School of Pharmacy will administer the MedData Program, which has 10 licenses that enable free clinics and other nonprofit health care organizations to assist clients in obtaining needed medications.

“The University is grateful for the Quantum Foundation’s support of this program that is a model for other communities,” said Palm Beach Atlantic University President Dr. David W. Clark. “By providing the education and medications needed by poor and uninsured people who have chronic health problems, we ultimately can improve the quality of their lives while saving government and other agencies precious healthcare dollars.”

UM Researching Robotic Treatment for Wounded Soldiers

Researchers at the Ryder Trauma Center at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center are in the final stages of testing a robot designed to improve treatment of American soldiers wounded on the battlefield.

The robot features a television screen that shows wounded soldiers the face and voice of a UM trauma surgeon more than 11,000 miles away from Iraq. It also allows the surgeon to talk to the patients and advise military doctors and nurses on the scene on treatment procedures.

“This is an incredible piece of technology,” said Dr. Jeffrey Augenstein, director of the Ryder Trauma Center. “It’s OnStar on steroids.”

The robot is being tested in Miami, and the UM researchers are working with the U.S. Army Trauma Training Center to test it at an undisclosed location in Iraq.

ICUF President Endorses Governor’s Proposed Higher Ed Reforms

In a column published by the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, ICUF President Ed H. Moore has endorsed Gov. Charlie Crist’s plan to boost state university funding by increasing tuition by 15 percent and funneling much of that money into financial aid programs.

Moore urged the Governor to recognize the vital role played by ICUF institutions in helping the state meet its higher education goals. He emphasized the importance of the Florida Resident Access Grant in ensuring students access to a college degree at independent colleges and universities.

“Our state can build brighter possibilities for Florida by working with all institutions to create the strong foundations of funding, through grants, tuition and direct support that are required as we aim for a brighter future,” Moore said. “A real bright future is made possible by creating strengthened linkages among all sectors of higher education and by expanding the access to success that will be required for the real global economic competition.”
University of Tampa President Ronald Vaughn was selected as the 2008 Business Executive of the Year, and UT was selected 2008 Business of the Year in the education category, by the Tampa Bay Business Journal at an awards ceremony on Dec. 4.

Vaughn was one of seven finalists, and UT was chosen as one of two finalists. The winners were screened and selected by an independent panel of judges from Tampa Bay’s business community.

A recent article in the Tampa Bay Business Journal states that UT, under Vaughn’s leadership has taken a more comprehensive approach to the education and development of its students than other universities. This philosophy has led to new programs focusing on the development of leadership skills, life skills and spirituality.

The article also states that with many families feeling the sting of the financial crisis, UT has ramped up efforts to make financial aid available to students.

Hodges University will begin to offer classes on the Highland’s campus of South Florida Community College (SFCC) as of January, 2009. Students there will be able to enroll in the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) program through an arrangement with Hodges.

Offering the IDS program at SFCC will provide greater convenience for residents there who plan to pursue degrees that are increasingly in demand by employers in today’s rapidly changing workplace. Graduates of this program will provide a readily available and highly skilled workforce for employers, which will help drive the economic revitalization of the local region and the state.

"We have had great experience with a similar program at other community colleges," said Dr. Terry McMahan, President of Hodges University. “This will give the students of SFCC the opportunity to complete a bachelor degree program by taking courses at the community college from which they received their associate degree. It’s a program that is challenging and intense, but allows the students to get a degree in a timely manner."