



This appendix subcomponent of the 2018 Accountability Plan is in response to the “Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018” that revised section 1001.706(5), Florida Statutes, to require each university board of trustees to submit a comprehensive proposal to improve undergraduate four-year graduation rates to the Board of Governors for implementation beginning in the fall of 2018 academic semester.

1. Identify academic, financial, policy, and curricular incentives and disincentives for timely graduation. [1 page max]

We have established objectives that will focus on Academic, Curricular, Financial, and Policy areas that, collectively, will make a positive impact on improving our 4-year graduation rate. They include: **Academic** – 1) Promote and increase timely graduation and persistence by focusing on well-established high impact and related practices; 2) Refine existing programs and implement new innovative programs through the Center for Academic Achievement to assist students with adjusting to college and with the rigors of college coursework; 3) Expand degree completion opportunities for students; 4) Implement, increase, and improve the use of technology/software that will contribute to students’ academic success and degree progression; 5) Establish new comprehensive university-wide academic advising services to improve advising practices for students; 6) Formalize and expand faculty engagement in enhancing student success. **Curricular** – 1) Develop a first-year experience program that provides a common set of experiences for all FTIC students, while providing opportunities to form deeper connections to the university. **Financial** – 1) Realign and expand our scholarship and financial aid programs to provide a positive impact on recruiting best-fit students, first-year retention rates, sophomore persistence, and 4-year graduation rates; 2) Expansion of scholarship and financial aid programs to significantly expand students enrolling in summer courses; 3) Commitment to containing the cost of degree to the student. **Policy** – 1) Create institutional-wide policy focusing on graduating students in a timely-manner (e.g. 4-years); 2) Improve operations involving the application process, document management, file review and course articulation to provide a more student friendly and efficient process for incoming undergraduate students; 3) Continue to improve and expand the communications and interactions between the enrollment services offices and incoming students by providing a more student-friendly/student-first environment; 4) Enhance our marketing and recruitment plans to attract best-fit students and students with the highest probability to succeed, including examining policies that are hindering students rather than enticing them to enroll; 5) Re-evaluate the current university-wide course scheduling and course enrollment management process to maximize course offerings that allow for timely graduation.

Academic, Curricular, Financial, and Policy incentives and disincentives have been defined. Specific **Incentives** include: 1) Expansion of high impact practices that will engage students outside the classroom that enables students to develop their leadership skills and broaden their professional networks for gaining employment; 2) Expand admittance into the Honors College; 3) SOAR in 4 plan for first-year students to stay on track to a 4-year degree and secure employment; 4) Expansion of financial aid that is targeted to students willing to commit FGCU as their first choice; 5) Implementation of a policy whereby merit scholarship program funding ends after 4 years with recipients required to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours each academic year while maintaining a 3.0 GPA; 6) Expansion of all scholarship and financial aid programs to significantly expand students enrolling in summer courses; 7) Creation of a gap fund to support tuition costs to help prevent students from dropping out between their sophomore and junior year; 8) Creation of a gap fund to support tuition costs to help prevent students from dropping out their senior year right before graduation; 9) Implementation of new institutional policies that will alleviate common bottle neck areas in course and space scheduling; 10) Establish a new office that focuses specifically on creating greater flexibility for students to take online courses and complete their degrees faster; 11) Expand the number of adjunct faculty to deliver more courses during the Summer term; 12) SOAR in 4 plan for first-year students to stay on track to a 4-year degree and secure employment; 13) Implement and improve the technology used by students so that it enhances and facilitates their use which will improve their time to degree progression. Specific **Disincentives** include: 1) Students who are currently receiving scholarships or financial aid are at risk for losing their funding (and not remaining in school) if they don’t maintain academic requirements and maintain enough credit hours; 2) Not meeting academic program milestones (e.g. earning certain grades in critical courses along their progression) will result in a student being removed from their major of choice; 3) Implementation of the “3/2 Withdrawal Rule” where students are limited to withdraw from 3 lower level courses and 2 upper level courses without financial penalty; 4) Creation and implementation of FGCU Timely Graduation of Undergraduate Students Policy to encourage students to graduate in 4 years and not accrue excess hours resulting in a surcharge.



2. Outline the implementation of a proactive financial aid program to enable full-time students with financial need to take at least 15 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters. [1 page max]

Within the context of our 4-year graduation rate plan, the focus of our **Financial** endeavors is to assist students in a variety of ways that will promote persistence to graduation in a timely fashion for all undergraduate students through their programs. This will be actuated through the broadening of the university's financial aid packaging and awarding strategies to recruit and retain students. In addition, FGCU continues to proactively pursue and increase funding for our merit scholarships as well as our Foundation need-based and merit scholarships. The expansion of student financial services on campus will continue to be extremely vital to help students understand their financial position and eliminate any barriers to matriculation and graduation. We are evaluating some of these ideas relative to cost/benefit and, thus, these ideas / plans may change or be modified. Provided below are a number of specific action items that outlines the implementation of a proactive financial aid plan to enable full-time students with financial need to take 15 credits in the Fall and Spring semesters as well as support for taking courses in the Summer term:

- FGCU has implemented a policy where merit scholarship programs require students to complete 30 credit hours each academic year and maintain a 3.0 GPA. Scholarship funding ends after 4 years thereby creating an incentive for students to graduate in 4 years.
- Investigate the creation of incentive and retention scholarships for need-based students who complete 30 credits and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress after each academic year.
- Creation of a gap fund to support tuition costs to help prevent students from dropping out between their sophomore and junior year.
- Creation of a gap fund to support tuition costs to help prevent students from dropping out their senior year right before graduation.
- Expand our partnerships with Collegiate High schools to offer scholarships to AA graduates.
- Offer scholarships to Collegiate School Associate in Arts degree graduates (similar to our ACE graduates) to help improve our four-year graduation and retention rates.
- Expansion of Florida Bright Futures Academic and Medallion recipient funding for Summer 2018 term where students are taking at least 6 credit hours.
- Implementation of a 6 credit hour of tuition and fees scholarship for students enrolled in our Summer Bridge program (Step Ahead) as students in our summer bridge program demonstrate higher retention rates.
- Starting with the Summer 2018 term, need-based students will be eligible for a second Pell award.



3. The signature below of the Chair of the university board of trustees certifies that the information in this plan is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that the board of trustees provides assurances that there will be no increased cost to students associated with the above plans, per Section 1001.706(5) of the Florida Statutes.

Certification: 
(Chair, University of Board of Trustees)

Date: May 1, 2018