



PRESS RELEASE

Governor Bush Announces Access and Diversity Initiative

Governor Bush announces increased funding for need based aid, creates a new scholarship program and an Access and Diversity Commission

January 11, 2006

TALLAHASSEE- Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Toni Jennings today launched the Access and Diversity Initiative to provide incentives to traditionally underrepresented students seeking an education in Florida's state university system. Further highlighting their commitment, Governor Bush and Lt. Governor Jennings are recommending \$52.4 million in the 2006-2007 budget to provide additional need-based aid and the creation of a new scholarship program designed for students who are the first in their family seeking a college degree.

"As Florida continues to close the achievement gap, it is important that our state's university system takes steps to increase accessibility, offering students the opportunity to pursue their dreams of a higher education," said Governor Bush. "These recommendations will provide necessary resources to open the doors of our higher education facilities to many students who previously were unable to pursue a college education due to financial barriers."

Florida has seen steady growth in minority enrollment in the State University System. Since 1998, Hispanic enrollment has grown by 49.4 percent from 30,792 to 46,002. African-American enrollment has increased nearly 28 percent from 31,413 to 40,141.

"The Florida Board of Governors supports Governor Bush and his initiative to improve diversity in our 11 institutions," said Board of Governors member and Chair of the Access and Diversity Commission Sheila McDevitt. "Minority enrollment is up in the State University System. We want to improve on that record and overcome the drop in out-of-state African-American students we saw this fall. Governor Bush's proposals will give our state universities some powerful tools to build on a dedicated commitment to access and diversity."

In an effort to boost enrollment, Governor Bush recently met with members of Florida A&M University's (FAMU) Student Government Association to discuss ways to improve accessibility to the State's colleges and universities. Many of the students' recommendations have been incorporated into the Governor's budget

proposal.

"On behalf of the students at Florida A&M University, I commend Governor Bush for his leadership and commitment to improving diversity and finding innovative ways to help minority students realize their dream of obtaining a college education," said FAMU Student Government Association president Ramon Alexander. "We are proud our ideas have been embraced by the state and are excited about the opportunity to reach out to middle and high school students as we help place them on a path of success."

Additionally, Governor Bush today signed Executive Order 06-05 creating the Access and Diversity Commission. The 17-member commission, set to complete their duties on June 30, 2006, will work with the Florida Board of Governors to evaluate the issues surrounding minority enrollment and advocate for the following recommendations:

- **NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID** - Governor Bush will recommend a \$35.8 million, or 36 percent, increase in need-based funding through the Florida Student Assistance Grants, the largest increase in the history of the program. These funds will provide, on average, \$1,152 of financial assistance to 116,842 students. Governor Bush will also recommend an additional \$1.1 million in funding for need-based financial aid at Florida's four Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Total funding will exceed \$12 million. Since 1998-99, the state has increased need-based aid funding by 180 percent, from \$35.3 million in 1998-99 to \$98.9 million in 2005-06.
- **FIRST GENERATION MATCHING GRANTS** - This \$6.5 million program will provide a dollar-for-dollar match with private donations to state universities. These scholarships will be awarded to full-time students who are Florida residents and the first in their families to attend college and have a financial need. Modeled after a program created by University of Florida President Bernie Machen, this scholarship will lessen the financial burden for low-income families.
- **COLLEGE BOARD PARTNERSHIP** - Governor Bush will recommend an increase in funding for the state's partnership with the College Board from \$7.1 million to \$10.1 million, a 42-percent increase. The funds will expand services that enhance student college readiness for traditionally underrepresented students. Services include AP, PSAT and SAT teacher training; college admission test preparation; SAT preparation; tutoring programs to help students transition into college and family information on colleges.
- **Stanley Tate Project STARS SCHOLARSHIP Program** - Governor Bush will recommend an increase in funding for the Project STARS program by \$4 million, or 67 percent, for a total of \$10 million. The program provides prepaid scholarships for at-risk, low-income students who remain drug and crime-free, stay in school and work with a mentor. These state funds combined with private donations will provide an additional 2,090 scholarships. These scholarships pay for tuition at state universities and

community colleges.

- College Reach Out Program (CROP) - Governor Bush will recommend a \$1 million increase, for a total of \$4.2 million, in funding for the CROP program. The funding will expand counseling and tutorial services, serving an additional 1,654 individuals, for a total of 10,200 students. It will also help expand after-school and Saturday programs, provide transportation to classes for dually enrolled students and assist in the of purchase computers to provide access to Florida Virtual School across the 38 CROP postsecondary institutions.
- UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS' FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENT MENTORING PARTNERSHIP- Governor Bush will create a new mentoring program in partnership with Florida's university presidents. The Volunteer Florida Foundation will team with the Florida Campus Compact to train mentors to provide academic support to middle school students across the state. The program will use the "Focus on College" curriculum that emphasizes activities reinforcing that higher education is attainable.

"I commend the Governor for his efforts to increase the number of minority and underrepresented students in the state university system. His funding proposals for need-based aid to minority students represents the largest increase in the history of the program," said Senator Al Lawson of Tallahassee. "Need-based funding is absolutely critical to attracting the underrepresented to the state colleges and universities in Florida. I pledge to work hard in the upcoming session to provide the dollars necessary to allow these students to have a better quality of life through Higher Education and to share in the American Dream." "I am very proud Governor Bush selected me to work on this important undertaking. This commission offers us a new avenue in our quest to help minority students succeed in Florida. I will work to my fullest ability to contribute to this endeavor," said State Representative Anitere Flores of Miami. The members of the Access and Diversity commission are:

- Commission Chairperson, Sheila McDevitt
- Board of Governors Member Ava Parker
- Education Commissioner John Winn
- State Senator Al Lawson
- State Representative Anitere Flores
- Florida A&M University Interim President Castell Bryant
- University of Florida President Bernie Machen
- Edward Waters College President Oswald P. Bronson
- Florida International University Board of Trustees member Miriam Lopez
- Florida State University financial aid officer Darryl Marshall
- Florida International University admissions officer Carmen Brown
- University of Central Florida admissions officer Gordon Chavis
- Florida A&M University student representative Keneshia Grant
- Florida State University student representative Jussara Madrid
- Executive Director of the Florida Education Fund Dr. Lawrence Morehouse
- University of Florida Professor David Colburn

- Executive Director of the Florida Campus Compact Dee Dee Rassmussen

Joining Governor Bush for the announcement were Senator Al Lawson, Representatives Anitere Flores, Dennis Baxley, David Meador, Joe Pickens, Board of Governors Chair Carolyn Roberts, Board of Governors member Sheila McDevitt, State University System Chancellor Mark Rosenberg, members of the Access and Diversity Commission and Florida A&M students.

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