

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
2026-E SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED  
**Committee on Appropriations**

**HB 5601-E — Higher Education**

by Rep. Busatta (SB 2516-E by Senator Harrell)

This bill conforms law to the proposed General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Specifically, the bill:

- Revises the State University System Performance-Based Incentive 4-year graduation rate metric for first-time-in-college students to include an adjusted cohort graduation rate for approved co-op programs, and to define “co-op” programs.
- Transfers the University of South Florida (USF) Sarasota/Manatee campus to New College of Florida (New College), provided certain conditions are met.
- Removes the requirement that the Florida Center for the Partnerships for Arts Integrated Teaching at USF be physically headquartered at USF Sarasota/Manatee to conform to the transfer from USF to New College.
- Establishes the Disaster Preparedness Center at Florida International University as a statewide center of excellence for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience training, in partnership with the Division of Emergency Management.
- Removes the requirements for the Institute for Freedom in the Americas to partner with the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom and for Miami Dade College to establish a direct-support organization for the institute.
- Permits the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors (BOG) to amend submitted lists of general education courses for each Florida College System institution and state university.
- Authorizes university boards of trustees, subject to approval by the BOG, to establish tuition for graduate and professional programs and out-of-state fees for nonresident students. The approval by the BOG as it relates to out-of-state fees for nonresidents is ministerial only.
- Removes the limitation that annual adjustments to out-of-state fees and tuition for graduate and professional programs may not exceed 15 percent, but requires the BOG to adopt regulations.
- Revises the Programs of Strategic Emphasis tuition and fee waiver to cover remaining out-of-pocket tuition and fee costs after other federal, state, and institutional gift aid is applied, and to remove associated requirements related to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.
- Requires universities to commit 12 percent of the prior fiscal year’s carry-forward balances toward public education capital outlay (PECO) completion of previously funded projects or for deferred maintenance.
- Revises the definition of the term “educational facilities” to include “research” use areas in requirements to establish and maintain educational plants.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

This summary is provided for information only and does not represent the opinion of any Senator, Senate Officer, or Senate Office.
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*Vote: Senate 32-2; House 76-28*