

II. Present Situation:

Florida's Public Postsecondary Institutions

Florida's public postsecondary education system could be said to have two tiers, though they are not described as such in the laws that create them. The 28 FCS institutions and the county areas they serve are established in s. 1000.21, F.S. The purpose of the FCS institutions is to maximize open access for students, respond to community needs for postsecondary academic education and career degree education, and provide associate and baccalaureate degrees that will best meet the state's employment needs.¹ The colleges are required to deliver the associate and baccalaureate degrees that they provide in a cost-effective manner that demonstrates substantial savings to the student and to the state over the cost of providing the degree at a state university.² The 11 institutions of the SUS, including 10 universities and one college, provide baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees. Because FCS institutions and state universities are located in all the major geographic regions of the state, an FCS institution campus and a state university campus are often located in close proximity to each other.

FCS institutions and state universities are administered by institutional boards of trustees. The FCS institutions are governed by rules of the State Board of Education. Under the State Constitution, state universities are governed by the Board of Governors (BOG).³

While the bill refers to university branch campuses, as university campuses away from the main campus commonly are called, the BOG does not use the term "branch campus," but, rather, "additional campus," in order to avoid conflict with the definition used by the regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. BOG Regulation 8.009, Educational Sites,⁴ defines and provides processes for establishing, reclassifying, relocating, and closing educational sites. Three types of additional campuses are defined in the regulation, each providing a range of enrollment to assist in determination of the appropriate classification. The regulation defines an additional campus as one that has received separate regional accreditation; is defined as an instructional and administrative unit of a university, apart from the main campus, that primarily offers students upper-division undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as a wide range of administrative and student support services appropriate for the number of student FTE served; and reflects a relatively permanent commitment by a university for the foreseeable future, not an occasional, time-limited, or transitory activity, in facilities which are university-owned, university-leased, or jointly used with another public institution. According to the BOG, as of June 2010, there were 16 additional campuses in the state university system.⁵

¹ s. 1001.60(1), F.S.

² s. 1001.60(2)(a), F.S.

³ Fla. Const., art IX, s. 7.

⁴ Readable at: http://www.flbog.edu/documents_regulations/regulations/8_009_2011_11_10_FINAL.pdf

⁵ BOG staff e-mail communication, February 7, 2012, on file with the committee.

The Higher Education Coordinating Council

The Higher Education Coordinating Council⁶ was created by the 2010 Legislature to serve as an advisory board to the Legislature, State Board of Education, and the Board of Governors and to make recommendations consistent with the following guiding principles:

- To achieve within existing resources a seamless academic educational system that fosters an integrated continuum of kindergarten through graduate school education for Florida's students;
- To promote consistent education policy across all educational delivery systems, focusing on students;
- To promote substantially improved articulation across all educational delivery systems;
- To promote a system that maximizes educational access and allows the opportunity for a high-quality education for all Floridians; and
- To promote a system of coordinated and consistent transfer of credit and data collection for improved accountability purposes between the educational delivery systems.

Members of the council represent both public and private postsecondary education sectors and well as private business.⁷

The 2011 Legislature required the council to issue a report⁸ by December 31, 2011, addressing:

- The primary core mission of public and nonpublic postsecondary education institutions in the context of state access demands and economic development goals;
- Performance outputs and outcomes designed to meet annual and long-term state goals;
- The state's articulation policies and practices; and
- A plan for workforce development education.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill requires the Higher Education Coordinating Council to review and evaluate the state's higher education governance structure and recommend to the Legislature potential revisions to the higher education delivery system to improve student services, access, affordability, and accountability. At a minimum, the council must consider academic offerings, fiscal efficiencies, and regional demographics. The council also must consider the potential to create an intermediate structure of institutions that are not part of the Florida College System or the State University System by making university branch campuses independent, combining university branch campuses with colleges, transferring certain colleges to the intermediate structure, or creating new institutions. The council must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The bill does not establish a date by which the report must be published.

⁶ 1004.015 F.S.,

⁷ Under s. 1004.015(2), F.S., the seven members of the council are the Commissioner of Education, the Chancellor of the State University System, the Chancellor of the Florida College System, the executive director of the Commission for Independent Education, the president of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, and two representatives of the business community appointed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

⁸Readable at: <http://www.floridahighereducation.org/doc/HECC-FINAL-REPORT-12-14-11.pdf>.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The BOG and the Department of Education provide administrative support to the Higher Education Coordinating Council.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)**CS by Budget on February 29, 2012:**

The committee substitute does not create a Postsecondary Education Study Committee but instead assigns the study of postsecondary education delivery systems to the Higher Education Coordinating Council. The council must report to the Governor, the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives regarding a possible restructuring of the higher education system.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
