

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Appropriations

BILL: CS/SB 1292

INTRODUCER: Education Committee and Senator Legg

SUBJECT: Postsecondary Education

DATE: April 21, 2014

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Graf	Klebacha	ED	Fav/CS
2.	Sikes	Elwell	AED	Favorable
3.	Elwell	Kynoch	AP	Pre-meeting

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 1292 restructures governance and functionality of online public postsecondary student support services related to libraries, online courses, and online student advising systems.

Specifically, the bill creates the Complete Florida Plus Program (Program) within the Innovation Institute at the University of West Florida and transfers the requirements and responsibilities associated with student support services that are currently administered through the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) to the new Program. The bill also establishes the Florida Center for Library Automation (Center) and reassigns the duties and resources regarding online library support services that are currently administered by the FLVC to the new Center. Additionally, the bill renames the Complete Florida Degree Program as the Complete Florida Degree Initiative (Initiative) and restructures the related functions under the new Program.

Senate Bill 2500, the proposed 2014-2015 Senate General Appropriations Bill, appropriates \$22.8 million for the Florida Virtual Campus.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2014.

II. Present Situation:

Complete Florida Degree Program

In 2012, the Legislature established the Complete Florida Degree Program to recruit, recover, and retain the state's adult learners and assist them in completing an associate degree or baccalaureate degree aligned to high-wage, high-skill workforce needs.¹ The program is administered by the University of West Florida (UWF), acting as the lead institution, in coordination with the Florida College System institutions, state universities, and private postsecondary institutions.²

The Complete Florida Degree Program must:³

- Provide adult learners with a single point of access to information and links to innovative online and accelerated distance learning courses, student and library support services, and electronic resources that will aid them in completing a postsecondary degree.
- Develop and implement an advising and student support system that includes the use of degree completion specialists, is based on best practices and processes, and includes academic and career support services designed specifically for adult learners.
- Use existing or develop new competency-based instructional and evaluation tools to assess prior performance, experience, and education to award college credit and reduce the time required for adults to complete degrees.
- Develop and implement an evaluation process to collect and analyze appropriate data in order to report program effectiveness.
- Develop and implement a statewide student recruitment campaign for the program.
- Identify proposed changes to the statewide computer-assisted student advising system developed by the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) to assist adult learners use of the system.
- Use the online admissions application implemented by the FLVC.
- Use the distance learning catalog implemented by the FLVC.

Florida Virtual Campus

In 2012, the Legislature created the FLVC by consolidating the services and resources previously provided by the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog, FACTS.org, the Florida Center for Library Automation, and the College Center for Library Automation. The FLVC was established to provide access to online student and library support services and to serve as a statewide resource and clearinghouse for public postsecondary education distance learning courses and degree programs.⁴

The primary purposes of the FLVC are to:⁵

- Establish a single library automation system and associated resources and services for all public postsecondary education institutions to use to support their learning, teaching, and research needs.

¹ Section 15, ch. 2012-34, L.O.F.

² Section 1006.735(2), F.S.

³ Section 1006.735(4)-(5), F.S.

⁴ Section 14, ch. 2012-134, L.O.F.

⁵ Section 1006.73(1), F.S.

- Provide information and access to distance learning courses and degree programs offered by the state's public postsecondary education institutions.
- Coordinate with the Florida College System (FCS) and the State University System (SUS) to identify and provide online academic support services and resources if the multi-institutional provision of such services and resources is more cost or operationally effective.

The FCS and SUS Chancellors exercise joint oversight of the FLVC and establish governance and reporting structures, administrative and operational guidelines and processes, staffing requirements, and the operational budget.⁶

The FLVC must:⁷

- Develop and manage a library information portal and automated library management tools for use by the FCS institutions and state universities.
- Develop and manage a statewide Internet-based catalog of distance learning courses, degree programs, and resources offered by public postsecondary education institutions to assist in the coordination and collaboration of articulation and access.
- Implement a streamlined, automated, online admissions application process for undergraduate transient students.
- Develop and manage a statewide computer-assisted student advising system that will support advising, registering, and certifying students for graduation and include a degree audit and articulation component.
- Coordinate the negotiation of statewide licensing of electronic library resources and preferred pricing agreements, issue purchase orders, and enter into contracts for the acquisition of distance learning resources, student and library support services, electronic resources, and other goods and services necessary to perform its duties.
- Promote and provide recommendations concerning the use and distribution of open-access textbooks and education resources to reduce costs and develop and standardized process for reviewing and approving open-access textbooks.
- Provide appropriate help desk support, training and consultation services to institutions and students using the services and resources of the FLVC.
- Identify and evaluate new technologies and instructional methods that can be used to improve distance learning instruction, student learning, the efficient delivery of student support services, and the overall quality of undergraduate distance learning courses and degree programs.
- Develop and implement a plan, in consultation with the public postsecondary education institutions, which describes the services and resources available through the FLVC to encourage students to use such services and resources.

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) reported that the FLVC as made progress toward functioning as a cohesive unit and saved approximately \$1.5 million by reducing positions and an additional \$116,586 by renegotiating leases. However, the FLVC continues to maintain three separate locations. The Tallahassee lease agreement

⁶ Section 1006.73(2), F.S.

⁷ Section 1006.73(5), F.S.

obligates the FLVC to pay for 2,000 square feet of space that it does not need. The FLVC maintains an \$8 million in reserve balance for which the obligations are unclear.⁸

Additionally, OPPAGA reported that the FLVC has not implemented key legislative priorities and lacks a plan for addressing key issues, such as:⁹

- The FLVC has not taken adequate steps to advertise to students services that are available through the FLVC.
- The FLVC Website is difficult to navigate and use.
- The FLVC advising system is out-of-date and relatively few students use the system.
- The FLVC distance learning catalog is functional but does not have ready access to data that is needed to fully meet the statutory requirements.
- The FCS and state university library systems continue to operate separately.

Licensing Electronic Library Resources

Florida law provides parameters for cost efficient and cost effective licensing of electronic library resources and outlines a process for identifying shared core resources among institutions that must be made available to all public postsecondary education students.¹⁰ The chancellors and vice chancellors of the FCS institutions and state universities must annually report to the Governor and the chairs of the legislative appropriations committee the cost savings realized as a result of the collaborative licensing process.¹¹

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill restructures governance and functionality of online public postsecondary student support services related to libraries, online courses, and online student advising systems.

Specifically, the bill creates the Complete Florida Plus Program (Program) within the Innovation Institute at the University of West Florida (UWF) and transfers the requirements and responsibilities associated with student support services that are currently administered through the FLVC to the new Program. The bill also establishes the Florida Center for Library Automation (Center) and reassigns the duties and resources regarding online library support services that are currently administered by the FLVC to the new Center. Additionally, the bill renames the Complete Florida Degree Program as the Complete Florida Degree Initiative (Initiative) and restructures the related functions under the new Program. The consolidation of duties and resources are intended to strengthen and streamline online services and resources to students pursuing higher education in Florida.

⁸ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, *Progress of Florida Virtual Campus*, presentation to the Higher Education & Workforce Subcommittee, Florida House of Representatives (Feb. 13, 2014), available at <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/monitordocs/Presentations/P14-19.pdf>.

⁹ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, *Progress of Florida Virtual Campus*, presentation to the Higher Education & Workforce Subcommittee, Florida House of Representatives (Feb. 13, 2014), available at <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/monitordocs/Presentations/P14-19.pdf>.

¹⁰ Section 1006.72, F.S.

¹¹ Section 1006.72(7), F.S.

Complete Florida Plus Program

The bill specifies that the purpose of the Program is to:

- Facilitate degree completion of the state's adult learners through the Initiative.
- Provide information and access to distance learning courses and degree programs offered by the state's public postsecondary institutions.
- Coordinate with the FCS and the SUS to identify and provide online academic support services and resources if the multi-institutional provision of such services and resources is more cost-effective or operationally effective.

The bill repeals section 1006.73 of the Florida Statutes and transfers responsibility regarding implementation of the services and resources that are currently assigned to the FLVC to the Program and requires the Program to:

- Develop and manage a statewide Internet-based catalog of distance learning courses, degree programs, and resources offered by public postsecondary institutions to assist with the coordination and collaboration of articulation and access to postsecondary education.
- Provide a streamlined, automated, online admissions application process for undergraduate transient students who are enrolled in a public postsecondary education institution and who enroll in a course offered by a public postsecondary education institution that is not the students' degree-granting institution.
- Develop and manage a statewide computer-assisted student advising system that will support student advising and registration and certification of students for graduation and include a degree audit and articulation component.
- Identify and evaluate new technologies and instructional methods that can be used to improve distance learning instruction and professional development for faculty, student learning outcomes, student access, the delivery of student support services, the alignment of degrees to career needs, and the overall quality of postsecondary distance learning courses and degree programs.
- Provide appropriate help desk support and training and consultation services to institutions and students using the Program services.
- Coordinate the negotiation of statewide licensing of resources and preferred pricing agreements, issue purchase orders, and execute contracts for the acquisition of distance learning resources, student support services, electronic resources, and other goods and services necessary to perform Program duties.
- Develop and implement a plan, in consultation with the public postsecondary education institutions, which describes the services and resources available through the Program to encourage students to use the Program services and resources.

The bill requires transfer of all records, personnel, property, existing contracts, and unexpended balance of appropriations, allocations, grants, and other funds of the FLVC to UWF. The bill also designates UWF as the successor in interest to the FLVC and be responsible for the provision of all authorized services.

Florida Center for Library Automation

The bill establishes the Center to provide a single library automation system and related resources and services that all public postsecondary institutions must use to support the teaching, learning, and research needs of students and faculty.

The Center must:

- Develop and manage a library information portal and automated library management tools for use by the FCS institutions and state universities.
- Coordinate the negotiation of statewide licensing of electronic library resources and preferred pricing agreements, issue purchase orders, and execute duties of the Center.
- Promote and provide recommendations concerning the use and distribution of open-access textbooks and education resources to reduce costs and work with public postsecondary education institutions to develop a standardized process for the review and approval of open-access textbooks.

The Center must be administered by an executive director who must be accountable to the executive director of UWF's Innovation Institute. The executive director of the Center must:

- Independently exercise all powers, duties, and functions of the Center as prescribed by law.
- Administer the operational requirements of the Center.
- Hire professional and administrative staff necessary to perform the duties of the Center.
- Keep administrative staff to the minimum necessary to administer the duties of the Center.

The bill repeals section 1006.72 of the Florida Statutes regarding licensing electronic library resources and incorporates related provisions into the Center.

The bill adds conforming references to reflect the new Program.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2014.

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:

Senate Bill 2500, the proposed 2014-2015 Senate General Appropriations Bill, appropriates \$22.8 million for the Florida Virtual Campus.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1006.735, 1007.01, 1009.23, and 1009.24.

This bill creates section 1004.448 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill repeals the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1006.72 and 1006.73.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)**CS by Education on March 25, 2014:**

The committee substitute differs from SB 1292 in that the committee substitute:

- Creates the Complete Florida Plus Program (Program) within the Innovation Institute at the University of West Florida and transfers the requirements and responsibilities associated with student support services that are currently administered through the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) to the new Program.
- Establishes the Florida Center for Library Automation (Center) and reassigns the duties and resources regarding online library support services that are currently administered by the FLVC to the new Center.
- Renames the Complete Florida Degree Program as the Complete Florida Degree Initiative (Initiative) and restructures the related functions under the new Program.

- Omits the provision regarding adding industry certifications to the list of articulated acceleration mechanisms.

B. Amendments:

None.

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