

By Senator Richter

23-02450-16

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing January 26, 2016, as "Florida Gulf Coast University Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, in May 1991, the State of Florida authorized the creation of Florida's tenth public university to provide higher education opportunities and workforce development in the previously underserved region of Southwest Florida, and

WHEREAS, on August 25, 1997, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) opened its doors to students, holding its first graduation in May 1998 with 81 graduates, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has grown into a regional university of nearly 15,000 students and now offers more than 53 undergraduate degree programs, 24 graduate degree programs, 9 certificate programs, and 3 doctoral degree programs, and

WHEREAS, FGCU's top priority is student success, with five colleges providing relevant programs with an accomplished faculty, small classes, and extensive individualized attention to help students prepare for successful careers and meet regional and statewide workforce needs, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has achieved national prominence in academics, environmental sustainability, and student service learning, with 1.5 million student service learning hours provided to the Southwest Florida community since 1997, and

WHEREAS, FGCU plays a critical role in stimulating the Southwest Florida economy, creating 3,723 jobs and infusing \$422 million into the region annually, and

WHEREAS, half of the FGCU campus, some 400 acres, is designated as restored and preserved wetlands, and the university operates a 15-acre solar field that generates 85 percent of the power for three academic buildings, saving \$700,000 in energy costs annually, and

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33 WHEREAS, the Emergent Technologies Institute will open this
34 year, providing research and learning opportunities that enhance
35 the university's STEM and sustainability initiatives, and

36 WHEREAS, FGCU is focused on college affordability for all
37 students by maintaining its commitment to cost containment,
38 holding tuition at the same level for 3 years, and

39 WHEREAS, FGCU emphasizes innovative and interdisciplinary
40 learning, using the region as a living laboratory and offering
41 students diverse opportunities to participate in meaningful
42 research led by their professors, who have conducted more than
43 \$194 million in research and sponsored programs since 1997, and

44 WHEREAS, FGCU has established the Institute of
45 Entrepreneurship, which brings together engineering and business
46 students to develop products and business plans in a real-world
47 setting with the help of community mentors, and

48 WHEREAS, FGCU's golf-management program is one of only 19
49 PGA-certified programs in the nation and the largest in this
50 state, and

51 WHEREAS, FGCU is a leader in the State University System,
52 with 74 percent of graduates employed within a year after
53 graduation, and

54 WHEREAS, FGCU serves as a cultural hub for the region,
55 offering a wealth of enrichment opportunities that include the
56 visual arts, music, theater, and public radio and television,
57 and

58 WHEREAS, FGCU's athletics program is a growing source of
59 pride, with the women's basketball team winning the Atlantic Sun
60 Conference title for five straight seasons and ranking 20th in
61 the nation in the AP Top-25 poll in March 2015, progressing to

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62 the second round of the National Collegiate Athletic Association
63 (NCAA) Championship, and

64 WHEREAS, the FGCU swimming and diving team claimed the
65 Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association Championship for the
66 sixth time in 7 years and was ranked 19th in the nation on
67 www.collegeswimming.com in November 2015, and

68 WHEREAS, the FGCU men's soccer team captured its sixth
69 consecutive regular season title in the Atlantic Sun Conference,
70 and the women's soccer team has won six consecutive conference
71 titles and, for the first time, reached the second round of NCAA
72 competition in 2015, and

73 WHEREAS, the FGCU collegiate experience continues to enrich
74 the lives of students through the university's long-standing
75 commitment to promote racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity on
76 campus, NOW, THEREFORE,

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78 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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80 That January 26, 2016, is recognized as "Florida Gulf Coast
81 University Day" in Florida in recognition of the university's
82 contributions as an outstanding institution of higher education
83 focused on student success.

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
85 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Florida Gulf
86 Coast University President Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D., as a
87 tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.