

By Senator Rodrigues

27-02691-21

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing March 23, 2021, as "Florida Gulf Coast University Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, in May 1991, then-Governor Lawton Chiles signed into law a bill passed by the Florida Legislature authorizing the creation of Florida's tenth public university, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), to provide higher education opportunities and workforce development in the previously underserved region of Southwest Florida, and

WHEREAS, FGCU opened its doors to students on August 25, 1997, and held its first commencement in May 1998 with 81 graduates, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has been led by outstanding and dynamic presidents Dr. Roy McTarnaghan, Dr. William C. Merwin, Dr. Wilson G. Bradshaw, and Dr. Michael V. Martin, and

WHEREAS, with the leadership and vision of current President Martin and the FGCU Board of Trustees, FGCU students have a clear pathway to success and the university is maintaining affordability for all students, and

WHEREAS, FGCU's top priority is student success, evidenced by the university's strong focus on providing the necessary academic resources and laboratory facilities for students to timely complete degrees from one of the university's six colleges, and

WHEREAS, FGCU boasts accomplished faculty members and dedicated staff who help students prepare for successful careers and meet regional and statewide workforce needs, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has strategically grown into a regional

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30 university of nearly 15,000 students and today offers 63
31 undergraduate, 26 master's, and 7 doctoral programs; has 37,200
32 alumni worldwide; and leads the State University System in the
33 percentage of alumni employed in this state after graduation,
34 and

35 WHEREAS, FGCU has climbed 11 spots to No. 17 in the U.S.
36 News and World Report Top Public School-Regional University
37 South rankings and increased 4-year graduation rates by 13
38 percentage points from 2013 to 2015, and

39 WHEREAS, FGCU's pathways to student success have led it to
40 achieve national prominence in academics, environmental
41 sustainability, and student service learning, with more than 3
42 million service hours contributed by students to the Southwest
43 Florida regional community since 1997, and

44 WHEREAS, FGCU emphasizes innovative and interdisciplinary
45 learning, using the region as a living laboratory while offering
46 students diverse opportunities to participate in meaningful
47 research led by their professors while earning a ranking among
48 the Top 50 Green Colleges, making it the only university in this
49 state to make the list, and

50 WHEREAS, FGCU has established The Water School, breaking
51 ground on the new academic building in November 2019, to create
52 a University of Distinction Program that will provide FGCU the
53 foundation to pursue the designation of a recognized state and
54 national leader in the area of water studies, focusing on local
55 issues to address challenges throughout the world, and

56 WHEREAS, FGCU has established the Daveler & Kauanui School
57 of Entrepreneurship, bringing together students from all
58 disciplines to develop products and business plans in a real-

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59 world setting, leading to recognition by the Princeton Review,
60 which named it the best such school in Florida and 29th in the
61 nation, and more than 400 businesses have been started by FGCU
62 students and alumni since August 2016, and

63 WHEREAS, FGCU's School of Nursing has 98 percent to 100
64 percent certification pass rates and 100 percent postgraduate
65 employment, and develops engaged leaders who deliver
66 transformative care, conduct research, and promote evidence-
67 based practice through academic and community partnerships, and

68 WHEREAS, FGCU's Lutgert College of Business and Marieb
69 College of Health and Human Services have launched Restart SWFL
70 to help businesses respond to the impact of COVID-19 and get
71 back on their feet and to improve consumer confidence, and

72 WHEREAS, FGCU's athletics programs continue to be a growing
73 source of pride for their loyal fans, with student-athletes
74 continuing to demonstrate their academic strengths, and

75 WHEREAS, the collegiate experience continues to enrich the
76 lives of FGCU students and serve the surrounding communities
77 through "The FGCU Effect" and the university's longstanding
78 commitment to promoting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity
79 on campus, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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83 That March 23, 2021, is recognized as "Florida Gulf Coast
84 University Day" in Florida.

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
86 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Michael V.
87 Martin, Ph.D., president of Florida Gulf Coast University, as a

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tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.