

By Senator Martin

33-01930-24

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing January 23, 2024, 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 2,584 students on August 25, 1997, and held its first commencement in May 1998 with 81 graduates, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has been led by five outstanding and dynamic presidents: Roy E. McTarnaghan, William C. Merwin, Wilson G. Bradshaw, Michael V. Martin, and Aysegul Timur, and

WHEREAS, with the leadership and vision of President Timur and the FGCU Board of Trustees, FGCU students will be encouraged to embrace an entrepreneurial spirit, and graduates will be well prepared for productive lives as civically engaged and environmentally conscious citizens with successful careers, and

WHEREAS, FGCU's top priority is the realization of its Excellence in Student Success strategy to provide students a comparative advantage as they enter the workforce, with early identification of career paths and the opportunity for all students to have meaningful work experiences before graduation, including internships, micro-credentials, and digital badges, and with a strong focus on relevant programs led by accomplished faculty and supported by dedicated staff to build tomorrow's

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30 workforce by graduating students who have in-demand expertise  
31 and transferable skills, and

32 WHEREAS, FGCU has strategically grown into a regional  
33 university of more than 16,000 students and today offers 64  
34 undergraduate, 26 graduate, and 7 doctoral programs and 17  
35 academic certificates, and

36 WHEREAS, FGCU's many pathways to student success have led  
37 it to achieve national prominence in student service learning as  
38 one of the only public institutions of higher education to make  
39 service learning a graduation requirement for all undergraduate  
40 students, with more than 4 million hours contributed to the  
41 southwest Florida community since 1997, and

42 WHEREAS, with restored or preserved nature making up half  
43 of its 800 acres, the FGCU campus is a living laboratory for  
44 innovative and interdisciplinary learning, offering students  
45 diverse opportunities to participate in meaningful research led  
46 by their professors, and

47 WHEREAS, in 2022, FGCU established The Water School,  
48 located in the midst of Florida's complex freshwater and  
49 saltwater systems, uniquely positioning it to explore water-  
50 based issues, including the health of waterways that impact  
51 surrounding ecosystems, regional and state economies, and the  
52 people who rely on water for life and leisure, and making FGCU a  
53 catalyst for change in the community and throughout the world,  
54 and

55 WHEREAS, FGCU continues to work collaboratively with the  
56 State University System to meet regional and statewide workforce  
57 needs by graduating career-ready students from the Marieb  
58 College School of Nursing in six program areas, with a nearly

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59 100 percent graduate employment rate and excellent first-time  
60 passage rates on required nursing licensure examinations, and

61 WHEREAS, FGCU has more than 43,000 graduates, 70 percent of  
62 whom are working in their respective fields of study, with 2,000  
63 businesses started in southwest Florida and more than 20  
64 chapters of the FGCU Alumni Association throughout the United  
65 States, and

66 WHEREAS, FGCU strives to bring diversification of the  
67 economy to the region it serves through innovation in  
68 agribusiness, construction management, and environmental  
69 engineering, and

70 WHEREAS, FGCU serves in and engages with its surrounding  
71 community, offering a wealth of enrichment opportunities,  
72 including visual arts, music, theater, and public radio and  
73 television, and

74 WHEREAS, FGCU's athletic teams continue to be a growing  
75 source of pride for their loyal fans, with nine programs having  
76 earned a top-25 national ranking in their respective sports, and  
77 student-athletes continuing to demonstrate their academic  
78 strengths, and

79 WHEREAS, the collegiate experience continues to enrich the  
80 lives of FGCU students as they transition from high school to  
81 college to career while serving the surrounding community  
82 through "Turning Ideas into Impact" and the university's  
83 longstanding commitment to service, NOW, THEREFORE,

84  
85 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

86  
87 That January 23, 2024, is recognized as "Florida Gulf Coast

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88 University Day" in Florida.

89 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with  
90 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Aysegul Timur,  
91 Ph.D., President of Florida Gulf Coast University, as a tangible  
92 token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.