

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to higher education; amending s.
3 1001.92, F.S.; revising certain state university
4 performance-based metrics; defining the term "co-op
5 program"; creating s. 1004.342, F.S.; providing
6 definitions; transferring specified assets and
7 liabilities from the University of South Florida
8 Sarasota/Manatee to New College of Florida by
9 specified dates; requiring New College of Florida to
10 provide a specified monthly payment to the University
11 of South Florida until such transfer is complete;
12 requiring such transfer to be in a written joint
13 transfer agreement; providing requirements for such
14 agreement and the transfer of such assets and
15 liabilities; requiring a facility use agreement
16 between the University of South Florida
17 Sarasota/Manatee and New College of Florida; providing
18 requirements for such agreement; providing
19 construction; providing applicability; providing
20 specified immunity from liability; providing for
21 future repeal; amending s. 1004.344, F.S.; removing
22 the requirement for the Florida Center for the
23 Partnerships for Arts Integrated Teaching to be
24 physically housed at the University of South Florida
25 Sarasota/Manatee; creating s. 1004.64992, F.S.;

26 | establishing the Disaster Preparedness Center at the
27 | Florida International University; providing the
28 | purposes of the center; providing that the center
29 | operates in partnership with the Division of Emergency
30 | Management; requiring and authorizing the center to
31 | perform specified functions and duties; authorizing
32 | certain entities to cooperate and share information
33 | with the center under certain circumstances; providing
34 | funding for the center; reenacting s. 1004.89, F.S.,
35 | relating to the Institute for Freedom in the Americas;
36 | amending s. 1007.55, F.S.; providing that the State
37 | Board of Education and the Board of Governors may
38 | amend the list of general education courses for
39 | certain institutions and universities; amending s.
40 | 1009.24, F.S.; revising programs for which the Board
41 | of Governors may establish tuition; authorizing state
42 | university boards of trustees to establish out-of-
43 | state fees for nonresident students; removing a
44 | provision requiring that adjustments to certain out-
45 | of-state fees not exceed a certain amount; requiring
46 | the Board of Governors to adopt a specified regulation
47 | relating to nonresident undergraduate degree-seeking
48 | student enrollment; providing state university
49 | requirements relating to the enrollment of such
50 | students; reenacting s. 1009.26(18), F.S., relating to

51 fee waivers; reenacting and amending s. 1011.45, F.S.,
52 relating to end of year balance of funds; removing an
53 obsolete date; amending s. 1013.01, F.S.; revising the
54 definition of the term "educational facilities";
55 providing an effective date.

56
57 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
58

59 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section
60 1001.92, Florida Statutes, as amended by chapter 2026-59, Laws
61 of Florida, is amended to read:

62 1001.92 State University System Performance-Based
63 Incentive.—

64 (1) A State University System Performance-Based Incentive
65 shall be awarded to state universities using performance-based
66 metrics adopted by the Board of Governors of the State
67 University System. Beginning with the Board of Governors'
68 determination of each university's performance improvement and
69 achievement ratings, and the related distribution of annual
70 fiscal year appropriation, the performance-based metrics must
71 include:

72 (a) The 4-year graduation rate and adjusted cohort
73 graduation rate for engineering programs and co-op programs for
74 first-time-in-college students. For purposes of this paragraph,
75 a "co-op program" is a program identified by a state university,

76 subject to approval by the Board of Governors, that combines
77 academic study with up to four semesters of related paid work
78 experience prior to graduation;

79
80 The Board of Governors may approve other metrics in a publicly
81 noticed meeting. The board shall adopt benchmarks to evaluate
82 each state university's performance on the metrics to measure
83 the state university's achievement of institutional excellence
84 or need for improvement and minimum requirements for eligibility
85 to receive performance funding. Benchmarks and metrics may not
86 be adjusted after university performance data has been received
87 by the Board of Governors.

88 Section 2. Section 1004.342, Florida Statutes, is created
89 to read:

90 1004.342 Efficient use of state university system assets
91 in Manatee and Sarasota Counties.—

92 (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section and in its
93 applicability in contracts, leases, and other written
94 instruments involved in implementing this section:

95 (a) The following terms have the same meaning and should
96 be interpreted and used interchangeably:

- 97 1. "University of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee."
- 98 2. "University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee."
- 99 3. "USF Sarasota/Manatee."
- 100 4. "USF Sarasota-Manatee."

101 (b) The term "New College" means New College of Florida.

102 (c) The term "USF" means the University of South Florida.

103 (2) TRANSFER OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES BETWEEN STATE
 104 UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS AND CAMPUSES.—

105 (a) The board of trustees of New College of Florida shall,
 106 as soon as reasonably practical, but no later than December 31,
 107 2026, complete all steps necessary or appropriate to assume,
 108 legally and financially, the full liability for any outstanding
 109 debt for any facilities constructed upon the properties that
 110 encompass the University of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee
 111 campus, including, but not limited to, any fees and costs
 112 associated with transferring, satisfying, retiring, defeasing,
 113 or repaying such debt obligations. The facilities contemplated
 114 in this paragraph include, but are not limited to, any
 115 dormitories or other campus facilities that were financed in
 116 whole or in part with debt payable by the board of trustees of
 117 the University of South Florida or the University of South
 118 Florida Financing Corporation and for which a balance of that
 119 debt remains outstanding on July 1, 2026.

120 (b) Until such time as New College of Florida completes
 121 the obligations listed in paragraph (a), New College of Florida
 122 shall transfer to the University of South Florida monthly a
 123 payment equal to the outstanding debt service on the facilities
 124 contemplated in this section, which shall be \$166,617 per month.
 125 All payments described in this section shall be paid from

126 sources available to New College of Florida and may not be paid
127 or funded from the University of South Florida or the University
128 of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee sources. The failure of New
129 College of Florida to transfer the amounts described in this
130 section shall invalidate the transfer of facilities, and such
131 facilities shall revert to the University of South Florida.

132 (c) Subject to the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (d),
133 all real property encompassing the University of South Florida
134 Sarasota/Manatee campus, and any existing contracts, leases,
135 obligations, responsibilities, and liabilities of the board of
136 trustees of the University of South Florida which are
137 principally associated with such real property or any facilities
138 constructed upon those parcels, must be transferred to the board
139 of trustees of New College of Florida by July 1, 2026. New
140 College of Florida shall be solely responsible for all costs of
141 operating, repairing, replacing, renovating, and maintaining the
142 facilities contemplated in this section as of the date of
143 transfer.

144 (d)1. The determination of the specific assets and
145 liabilities to be transferred under this section must be made in
146 a written joint transfer agreement, including the facility use
147 agreement required by subsection (3), between the board of
148 trustees of the University of South Florida and the board of
149 trustees of New College of Florida by July 1, 2026. The boards
150 of trustees must jointly submit the signed agreements to the

151 Board of Governors. When determining the specific assets and
152 liabilities to be transferred between institutions, the board of
153 trustees of each institution must adhere to the following
154 guiding principles:

155 a. Any academic, administrative, or residential buildings
156 and other assets that are reasonably considered permanent and
157 immovable from the existing University of South Florida
158 Sarasota/Manatee campus parcels, including general educational
159 and classroom furnishings and fixtures located therein, shall be
160 transferred to the board of trustees of New College of Florida
161 for the future use of New College of Florida students and
162 faculty.

163 b. Any intellectual property, intangible property,
164 educational and research equipment that is not permanently
165 affixed to the facilities, computers and other equipment
166 previously assigned to personnel remaining in employment with
167 the University of South Florida, records, and any institutional
168 insignia or items that have historical significance to the
169 University of South Florida which are not specifically
170 associated with the parcels of land or facilities that will be
171 transferred shall remain the property of the board of trustees
172 of the University of South Florida.

173 c. Contracts for the lease of a temporary residence on the
174 University of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee campus between the
175 University of South Florida and a student, or an individual

176 acting on the student's behalf, which are in place before the
177 transfer of ownership of a residential facility on that campus
178 must be:

179 I. Transferred from the University of South Florida to New
180 College of Florida.

181 II. Fully honored in terms, duration, and price by the
182 board of trustees of New College of Florida until at least
183 August 15, 2027, unless the student or lessee voluntarily opts
184 to vacate the residential contact before its expiration date, in
185 which case New College of Florida must allow the lessee to go
186 free of any cancellation fee or remaining rental charge.

187 2. In the event of a dispute on the transfer of any
188 specific assets and liabilities required by this section before
189 July 1, 2026, the boards must jointly notify the Board of
190 Governors of the remaining points of disagreement. The Board of
191 Governors, by majority vote, must resolve any remaining disputed
192 issues and terms and order the specific transfers no later than
193 September 30, 2026. When determining and ordering any disputed
194 transfers, the Board of Governors must adhere to the guiding
195 principles in subparagraph 1.

196 (3) FACILITY USE AGREEMENT.—

197 (a) A University of South Florida student who was admitted
198 to the university before July 1, 2026, and who remains
199 continuously enrolled must receive the highest priority for the
200 use of space for classroom instruction and associated

201 educational needs in any transferred property or facility until
202 the student has been provided the opportunity to graduate from
203 the University of South Florida within a reasonable period of
204 time, not to exceed 4 full academic years after the date of the
205 student's initial enrollment, as determined by the board of
206 trustees of the University of South Florida.

207 (b) The board of trustees of New College of Florida must
208 enter into a facility use agreement with the board of trustees
209 of the University of South Florida which makes available, free
210 of any charge to the University of South Florida, sufficient
211 academic and student support space in the transferred properties
212 or facilities so that a University of South Florida student who
213 was admitted to the university before July 1, 2026, has the
214 reasonable opportunity to complete his or her University of
215 South Florida degree programs on his or her local campus and to
216 ensure that New College of Florida students, faculty, and staff
217 have access to the educational and administrative space, when
218 feasible, during and throughout the University of South Florida
219 teach-out process.

220 (c) The University of South Florida may not allow a newly
221 enrolled student whose initial offer of admission to the
222 university came after July 1, 2026, to designate the University
223 of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee campus as the student's home
224 campus of the University of South Florida.

225 (d) This subsection does not prohibit the University of

226 South Florida and New College of Florida from jointly entering
227 into any other mutual agreement to share or use space in any of
228 the transferred properties or facilities when it is in the best
229 interest of both institutions or the students thereof.

230 (4) IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY.—The board of trustees of the
231 University of South Florida and the board of trustees of New
232 College of Florida, and their respective officers, trustees,
233 employees, attorneys, and agents, are immune from any and all
234 civil liability pertaining to or arising from compliance with
235 this section, including the transfers required by, or those made
236 as a direct result of, this section.

237 (5) REPEAL.—This section is repealed July 1, 2028, but
238 after that date the asset transfers required by this section
239 shall not be impacted solely by the repeal of this section.

240 Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 1004.344, Florida
241 Statutes, is amended to read:

242 1004.344 The Florida Center for the Partnerships for Arts
243 Integrated Teaching.—

244 (1) The Florida Center for the Partnerships for Arts
245 Integrated Teaching is created within the University of South
246 Florida ~~and shall be physically headquartered at the University~~
247 ~~of South Florida Sarasota/Manatee.~~

248 Section 4. Section 1004.64992, Florida Statutes, is
249 created to read:

250 1004.64992 Disaster Preparedness Center.—

251 (1) The Disaster Preparedness Center is established at the
252 Florida International University as the statewide center of
253 excellence for disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and
254 resilience training. The purpose of the center is to serve as a
255 statewide hub for disaster simulation, training, interagency
256 collaboration, applied research, and education. The center shall
257 be operated in partnership with the Division of Emergency
258 Management.

259 (2) The center shall:

260 (a) Develop and conduct rigorous, evidence-based, and
261 scenario-based training programs on disaster preparedness,
262 mitigation, response, and recovery.

263 (b) Evaluate coastal and urban resilience to hurricanes,
264 flooding, storm surge, wildfires, and other natural or human-
265 caused hazards.

266 (c) Develop and operate simulation and training
267 environments to prepare first responders, emergency managers,
268 engineers, health professionals, and students for urban search
269 and rescue, including collapsed structure and mass-casualty
270 training.

271 (d) Construct and maintain realistic disaster simulation
272 environments, including, but not limited to, hurricanes,
273 flooding, storm surge, wildfires, collapsed structures, urban
274 search-and-rescue, hazardous material areas, and emergency
275 operations center replicas.

276 (e) Serve as a statewide venue for multiagency disaster
277 exercises, emergency management certification, and continuing
278 education.

279 (f) Develop best practices, resources, and training
280 modules to support public and private sector preparedness.

281 (g) Support applied research in disaster preparedness and
282 mitigation, infrastructure hardening, and recovery.

283 (h) Provide technical assistance to the Legislature, state
284 agencies, local governments, and the Federal Government in
285 evaluating and improving policies relating to resilience,
286 emergency management, and disaster response.

287 (i) Collaborate with the relevant federal and state
288 agencies and private sector entities to improve disaster
289 readiness.

290 (j) Serve as a resource to assist local, state, and
291 federal emergency operations during declared disasters.

292 (k) Plan and host events, workshops, and exercises to
293 strengthen the capacity of local, state, federal, and
294 international partners.

295 (3) The center may:

296 (a) Hire faculty, staff, and technical experts and develop
297 courses relating to resilience and rescue activities.

298 (b) Hold events, including symposiums, exercises,
299 demonstrations, and conferences.

300 (c) Conduct, aid, and sponsor research and publish, or

301 otherwise make available to residents and stakeholders,
302 articles, reports, analyses, and resources.

303 (d) Provide training and continuing education to first
304 responders, government officials, private sector partners, and
305 students.

306 (e) Assist the Legislature and governmental entities with
307 reports, policy analyses, testimony, and technical support.

308 (f) Provide scholarships, research assistantships, and
309 fellowships for students pursuing careers in disaster response,
310 resilience, and emergency management.

311 (g) Partner with other state universities, agencies,
312 institutes, and associations to advance the center's goals.

313 (h) Provide training opportunities for students, first
314 responders, and professionals in disaster management,
315 environmental resilience, and infrastructure testing.

316 (i) Facilitate commercialization of resilience
317 technologies through partnerships with Florida businesses,
318 start-ups, and industries.

319 (4) The Division of Emergency Management, state and local
320 emergency response agencies, and other governmental entities may
321 cooperate and share information with the center as needed,
322 subject to applicable confidentiality and security requirements.

323 (5) The center shall be funded by appropriations provided
324 in the General Appropriations Act, charitable grants and
325 donations, contracts, and institutional resources.

326 Section 5. Notwithstanding the expiration date in section
327 9 of chapter 2025-199, Laws of Florida, section 1004.89, Florida
328 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

329 1004.89 Institute for Freedom in the Americas.—The
330 Institute for Freedom in the Americas is hereby created at Miami
331 Dade College to preserve the ideals of a free society and
332 promote democracy in the Americas. The institute shall be
333 located at the Freedom Tower and shall:

334 (1) Hold workshops, symposiums, and conferences that
335 provide networking opportunities for leaders throughout the
336 region to gain new insights and ideas for promoting democracy,
337 including knowledge of and insight into the intellectual,
338 political, and economic freedoms that are foundational to a
339 democratic society.

340 (2) Enter into an agreement with the Adam Smith Center for
341 Economic Freedom to provide participants with academic
342 coursework and programs that advance democratic practices and
343 economic and legal reforms.

344 (3) Provide educational and experiential opportunities for
345 regional leaders committed to careers in democracy and
346 governance.

347 Section 6. Subsection (4) of section 1007.55, Florida
348 Statutes, is amended to read:

349 1007.55 General education course principles, standards,
350 and content.—

351 (4) In performing its duties under ss. 1007.24 and
 352 1007.25, by December 1, 2024, and each December 1 thereafter,
 353 the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall submit to the
 354 State Board of Education and the Board of Governors courses that
 355 have been approved by public postsecondary educational
 356 institutions as meeting general education requirements. The
 357 listing of general education courses must include the
 358 information in paragraphs (2) (a), (b), and (c). The State Board
 359 of Education and the Board of Governors must approve, ~~or reject,~~
 360 or amend the list of general education courses for each Florida
 361 College System institution and state university, respectively.

362 Section 7. Paragraph (b) of subsection (4) of section
 363 1009.24, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

364 1009.24 State university student fees.—

365 (4)

366 (b) 1. Subject to approval by the Board of Governors, each
 367 university board of trustees may establish tuition for graduate
 368 and professional programs and out-of-state fees for nonresident
 369 students. The Board of Governors' approval authority for out-of-
 370 state fees for nonresident students pursuant to this
 371 subparagraph is ministerial only and may not be withheld unless
 372 the State University System is out of compliance with the
 373 systemwide limitation on enrollment of nonresident undergraduate
 374 degree-seeking students established by regulation of the Board
 375 of Governors ~~all programs~~. Except as otherwise provided in this

376 section, the sum of tuition and out-of-state fees assessed to
377 nonresident students must be sufficient to offset the full
378 instructional cost of serving such students. ~~However,~~
379 ~~Adjustments to out-of-state fees or tuition for graduate~~
380 ~~programs and professional programs may not exceed 15 percent in~~
381 ~~any year.~~

382 2. Notwithstanding subparagraph 1., in carrying out its
383 duties to ensure the systemwide limitation on nonresident
384 undergraduate degree-seeking student enrollment is not exceeded,
385 the Board of Governors shall adopt a regulation requiring each
386 university to include in its accountability plan year-to-year
387 enrollment projections on the percentage of nonresident
388 undergraduate degree-seeking students for the upcoming 4
389 academic years. The regulation shall also require each
390 university to annually update its accountability plan with the
391 actual percentage of nonresident undergraduate degree-seeking
392 students enrolled during the prior year. If, in any given year,
393 the Board of Governors determines a university enrolled a
394 greater percentage of such students than projected, the Board of
395 Governors shall require corrective action, which may include:

396 a. A revision to the university's accountability plan;
397 b. An enrollment reduction plan; or
398 c. Reduction of such university's undergraduate out-of-
399 state fee.

400 Section 8. Notwithstanding the expiration date in section

401 7 of chapter 2025-199, Laws of Florida, subsection (18) of
402 section 1009.26, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

403 1009.26 Fee waivers.—

404 (18) (a) For every course in a Program of Strategic
405 Emphasis, or in a state-approved teacher preparation program
406 identified by the Board of Governors, as identified in
407 subparagraph 3., in which a student is enrolled and has out-of-
408 pocket expenses for tuition and fees after all other federal,
409 state, and institutional gift aid is applied, a state university
410 shall waive 100 percent of the tuition and fees of the student's
411 out-of-pocket expenses for an equivalent course in such program
412 for a student who:

413 1. Is a resident for tuition purposes under s. 1009.21.

414 2. Has earned at least 60 semester credit hours towards a
415 baccalaureate degree within 2 academic years after initial
416 enrollment at a Florida public postsecondary institution.

417 3. Enrolls in one of 10 Programs of Strategic Emphasis as
418 adopted by the Board of Governors or a state-approved teacher
419 preparation program. The Board of Governors shall adopt eight
420 Programs of Strategic Emphasis in science, technology,
421 engineering, or math; beginning with the 2022-2023 academic
422 year, two Programs of Strategic Emphasis in the critical
423 workforce gap analysis category; and beginning with the 2023-
424 2024 academic year, two state-approved teacher preparation
425 programs for which a student may be eligible to receive the

426 tuition and fee waiver authorized by this subsection. The
427 programs identified by the board must reflect the priorities of
428 the state and be offered at a majority of state universities at
429 the time the Board of Governors approves the list.

430 (b) A waiver granted under this subsection is applicable
431 only for upper-level courses and up to 110 percent of the number
432 of required credit hours of the baccalaureate degree program for
433 which the student is enrolled. A student granted a waiver under
434 this subsection shall continue receiving the waiver until the
435 student graduates, exceeds the number of allowable credit hours,
436 or withdraws from an eligible program, regardless of whether the
437 program is removed from the approved list of eligible programs
438 subsequent to the student's enrollment.

439 (c) Each state university shall report to the Board of
440 Governors the number and value of all waivers granted annually
441 under this subsection. A state university in compliance with
442 this subsection may earn incentive funding, subject to
443 appropriation, in addition to the funding provided under s.
444 1001.92.

445 (d) The Board of Governors shall adopt regulations to
446 administer this subsection.

447 Section 9. Notwithstanding the expiration date in section
448 5 of chapter 2025-199, Laws of Florida, subsection (3) of
449 section 1011.45, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection
450 (5) of that section is reenacted, to read:

451 1011.45 End of year balance of funds.—Unexpended amounts
452 in any fund in a university current year operating budget shall
453 be carried forward and included as the balance forward for that
454 fund in the approved operating budget for the following year.

455 (3) A university's carry forward spending plan must
456 include the estimated cost per planned expenditure and a
457 timeline for completion of the expenditure. A carry forward
458 spending plan may include retention of the carry forward balance
459 as a reserve fund to be used for authorized expenses in
460 subsequent years. For any annual reserve balance in excess of
461 the 7 percent minimum carry forward balance pursuant to
462 subsection (1), the authorized expenditures in a carry forward
463 spending plan must include a commitment of 12 percent of the
464 university's prior ~~2025–2026~~ fiscal year state operating fund
465 carry forward balance to fund a public education capital outlay
466 project for which an appropriation has previously been provided
467 which requires additional funds for completion and which is
468 included in the list required by s. 1001.706(12)(d) or for
469 deferred building maintenance expenses. The carry forward
470 spending plan must identify the specific public education
471 capital outlay project and the amount the university will
472 contribute toward the fixed capital outlay project pursuant to
473 s. 1001.706(12)(d) or specific deferred maintenance project.
474 Authorized expenditures in a carry forward spending plan may
475 include:

476 (a) Commitment of funds to a public education capital
477 outlay project for which an appropriation has previously been
478 provided that requires additional funds for completion and which
479 is included in the list required by s. 1001.706(12)(d);

480 (b) Completion of a renovation, repair, or maintenance
481 project that is consistent with s. 1013.64(1) or replacement of
482 a minor facility;

483 (c) Completion of a remodeling or infrastructure project,
484 including a project for a developmental research school, if such
485 project is survey recommended pursuant to s. 1013.31;

486 (d) Completion of a repair or replacement project
487 necessary due to damage caused by a natural disaster for
488 buildings included in the inventory required pursuant to s.
489 1013.31;

490 (e) Operating expenditures that support the university's
491 mission;

492 (f) Any purpose specified by the board or in the General
493 Appropriations Act, including the requirements in s.
494 1001.706(12)(c) or similar requirements pursuant to Board of
495 Governors regulations;

496 (g) A commitment of funds to a contingency reserve for
497 expenses incurred as a result of a state of emergency declared
498 by the Governor pursuant to s. 252.36; and

499 (h) Deferred building maintenance expenses for the
500 maintenance, repair, and renovation of projects to improve the

501 health and safety of such facilities.

502 (5) A university's carry forward spending plan pursuant to
503 subsection (1) must provide detailed documentation of
504 expenditures that the university applied toward the prior year
505 carry forward spending plan.

506 Section 10. Subsection (6) of section 1013.01, Florida
507 Statutes, is amended to read:

508 1013.01 Definitions.—The following terms shall be defined
509 as follows for the purpose of this chapter:

510 (6) "Educational facilities" means the buildings and
511 equipment, structures, and special educational and research use
512 areas that are built, installed, or established to serve
513 primarily the educational purposes and secondarily the social
514 and recreational purposes of the community and which may
515 lawfully be used as authorized by the Florida Statutes and
516 approved by boards.

517 Section 11. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
518 law.