

By Senators Passidomo and Benacquisto

28-02400-17

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing March 28, 2017, as "Florida Gulf Coast University Day" in Florida and commemorating the university's 20th anniversary.

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, in August 2017, FGCU will celebrate its 20th anniversary, and

WHEREAS, during FGCU's first 20 years, it has been led by three outstanding and dynamic presidents: Roy McTarnaghan, William C. Merwin, and current President Wilson G. Bradshaw, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has strategically grown into a regional university of nearly 15,000 students and today offers 55 undergraduate, 30 graduate, 11 certificate, and 3 doctoral 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

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30 academics, environmental sustainability, and student service  
31 learning, with students contributing more than 2 million hours  
32 of volunteer service to the Southwest Florida community since  
33 1997, and

34 WHEREAS, FGCU started with land, consisting of 400 acres of  
35 restored and preserved wetlands, and a grand plan, and

36 WHEREAS, FGCU operates a 15-acre solar field that generates  
37 85 percent of the electric power for three academic buildings,  
38 saving \$700,000 in energy costs annually, and

39 WHEREAS, FGCU emphasizes innovative and interdisciplinary  
40 learning, using the region as a living laboratory while offering  
41 students diverse opportunities to participate in meaningful  
42 research led by their professors, who have conducted more than  
43 \$204.8 million in research and sponsored programs since 1997,  
44 and

45 WHEREAS, FGCU has established the Institute of  
46 Entrepreneurship, bringing engineering and business students  
47 together to develop products and business plans in a real-world  
48 setting, and the Emergent Technologies Institute, which provides  
49 learning opportunities that will enhance the university's  
50 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)  
51 education and sustainability initiatives, and

52 WHEREAS, FGCU has one of only 19 PGA-accredited golf  
53 management programs in the nation and the only accredited  
54 program in Florida accepting enrollment of new students, and

55 WHEREAS, FGCU is a leader in the State University System,  
56 with approximately 75 percent of alumni employed or continuing  
57 their education within 1 year after graduation, and

58 WHEREAS, FGCU focuses on college affordability for all

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59 students by maintaining its commitment to cost containment,  
60 holding tuition at the same level for 4 years, and

61 WHEREAS, FGCU serves as a cultural hub for the region,  
62 offering a wealth of enrichment opportunities that include the  
63 visual arts, music, theater, and public radio and television,  
64 and

65 WHEREAS, FGCU's athletics programs continue to be a growing  
66 source of pride for their loyal fans, earning 56 league titles  
67 in the past 9 years and making 25 NCAA Tournament appearances in  
68 the previous five seasons, and

69 WHEREAS, FGCU has had a total of nine student athletes who  
70 have advanced to professional teams, and

71 WHEREAS, FGCU experienced international exposure at the  
72 2016 Summer Olympic Games, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with  
73 beach volleyball player Brooke Youngquist Sweat, a 2008 FGCU  
74 alumna, representing the United States, joining two FGCU  
75 swimmers, Lani Cabrera, Class of 2016, and Evita Leter, Class of  
76 2017, and

77 WHEREAS, FGCU student athletes continue to demonstrate  
78 their academic strength by earning an overall grade point  
79 average of 3.24 for the 2016 fall semester, and their grade  
80 point averages have exceeded those of the undergraduate student  
81 body for 15 consecutive semesters, and

82 WHEREAS, the collegiate experience continues to enrich the  
83 lives of FGCU students through "The FGCU Effect" and the  
84 university's longstanding commitment to promoting racial,  
85 ethnic, and cultural diversity on campus, NOW, THEREFORE,  
86

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

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89 That March 28, 2017, is recognized as "Florida Gulf Coast  
90 University Day" in Florida and that Florida Gulf Coast  
91 University is celebrated on the occasion of its 20th anniversary  
92 as an outstanding institution of higher education focused on  
93 student success.

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