

By Senator Passidomo

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing the historic origins, public mission, academic excellence, and statewide contributions of Florida Gulf Coast University and designating January 27, 2026, as "Florida Gulf Coast University Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) has matured into a consequential and trusted institution of higher learning whose devotion to intellectual pursuits, civic engagement, environmental stewardship, and regional vitality has strengthened the culture and economy of Southwest Florida, thereby affirming the value of purposeful investment in education and the university's rightful place in the civic and academic life of this state, and

WHEREAS, in May 1991, then-Governor Lawton Chiles, acting with foresight and a deliberate commitment to expanding educational opportunities in this state, signed into law the creation of Florida's tenth public university in order to provide access to higher education and support workforce development in the rapidly growing but 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, marking the beginning of its enduring role as a center of academic promise and public purpose, and

WHEREAS, through the years, FGCU has been shaped and strengthened by the leadership of five distinguished presidents: Dr. Roy E. McTarnaghan, Dr. William C. Merwin, Dr. Wilson G.

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Bradshaw, Dr. Michael V. Martin, and Dr. Aysegul Timur, each contributing to the university's growth, character, and academic standing in the State University System, and

WHEREAS, under the current leadership of Dr. Timur and the FGCU Board of Trustees, the university continues to foster entrepreneurial thinking, civic responsibility, and environmental consciousness among its students as it prepares them for productive and meaningful professional lives, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has strategically expanded to an enrollment of more than 16,600 students and now offers 66 undergraduate, 28 graduate, and 7 doctoral degrees, as well as 19 academic certificates, thereby broadening educational access and meeting statewide workforce needs, and

WHEREAS, the pathways to student success at FGCU have yielded national recognition for service learning, with FGCU standing as one of the only public institutions to require service learning for all undergraduates, resulting in 5.3 million service hours contributed to the Southwest Florida community since 1997, and

WHEREAS, the university preserves half the land of its 800-acre campus as natural habitat, serving as a living laboratory for interdisciplinary learning, hands-on research, and student engagement guided by faculty expertise, and

WHEREAS, FGCU established The Water School, which opened in 2022, distinguishing the university at the center of one of the most complex freshwater and saltwater systems in the nation and enabling research and teaching that addresses the health of waterways and their impact on surrounding ecosystems, regional and state economies, and the communities that rely on them, and

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WHEREAS, FGCU continues to work collaboratively with the State University System to support and meet statewide and regional workforce demands by graduating career-ready students from the Marieb College School of Nursing, with its six programs having a 100-percent first-time passage rate on the required nursing licensure examinations in 2018, 2019, 2023, and 2024, and

WHEREAS, the FGCU Alumni Association has more than 48,000 members, with almost 70 percent of alumni working in their field of study and approximately 2,000 alumni-founded businesses contributing to the economic vitality of Southwest Florida, and

WHEREAS, FGCU has continued to advance economic diversification in the region it serves through innovation in agribusiness, construction management, environmental engineering, and other critical industries, and

WHEREAS, the university maintains strong collaboration with employers to ensure its programs align with community and regional workforce needs, thereby contributing to a more prosperous and thriving economic engine in Southwest Florida, and

WHEREAS, FGCU's athletic programs continue to be a growing source of pride, as nine programs have earned top 25 national rankings, all while student athletes maintain exemplary academic standards, and

WHEREAS, the collegiate experience at FGCU enriches the lives of its students as they transition from high school to higher education to meaningful careers, fulfilling the university's strategic vision of turning ideas into impact and reinforcing its longstanding commitment to public service, NOW,

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88 THEREFORE,

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

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92 That January 27, 2026, is designated as "Florida Gulf Coast
93 University Day" in Florida, in recognition of the university's
94 enduring service to its students, its region, and the people of
95 this state.

96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
97 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Dr. Aysegul
98 Timur, President of Florida Gulf Coast University, as a tangible
99 token of the high esteem in which the university is held and as
100 an expression of the confidence of the Florida Senate in the
101 continued growth, leadership, and public contributions of
102 Florida Gulf Coast University.