



The Florida Senate

Interim Project Report 2008-139

October 2007

Committee on Higher Education

PERFORMANCE OF STATE-SUPPORTED PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

SUMMARY

Florida provides tuition assistance to students at private postsecondary institutions for the purpose of increasing access to postsecondary education. In addition to providing need-based assistance, Florida provides tuition assistance through a number of programs that are not based on financial need, including the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) and the Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program. During the 2007 Session, the Higher Education Committee requested information concerning the performance of students at private postsecondary institutions where these two programs support students. This interim project surveyed private postsecondary institutions to obtain that information.

The report includes data submitted by private postsecondary institutions concerning admission criteria and graduation rates and includes comparable data for state universities. The report recommends that if the Legislature chooses to establish measures of performance for the private postsecondary institutions that participate in the FRAG and ABLE tuition assistance programs, the Legislature should codify the standards to evaluate whether the programs are meeting expectations.

for students who prefer a private institution and for those seeking a degree in a special subject that may not be available at state institutions.

Florida has provided tuition assistance to students at private, baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions since 1979.¹ At present, several programs reduce the cost of private school tuition to students at private postsecondary institutions in the state² including the two programs that are the subject of this report: The William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG)³ and the Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program.⁴

These programs are for degree seeking students enrolled at eligible private postsecondary institutions; however, a student is prohibited from pursuing a degree in theology or divinity under the grants. Students must meet the general eligibility requirements for receipt of state aid, meet residency requirements, and enroll for a minimum of 12 credit hours. ABLE grant recipients must be pursuing a bachelor's degree. The statute does not require students who receive a FRAG award to pursue a bachelor's degree; however, the student must be enrolled at an institution that grants bachelor's degrees. Three of the 28 institutions eligible for the FRAG program grant associate degrees as well as bachelor's degrees.

BACKGROUND

State-supported Tuition Assistance to Students at Private Postsecondary Institutions

A number of states provide tuition assistance in the form of grants to students who attend private postsecondary institutions in the state. Such tuition assistance increases access to baccalaureate-degree programs by helping students to meet the cost of private school tuition. To the extent that students who would have attended a state institution choose a private institution instead, the state realizes a cost savings by providing access to postsecondary education at a fraction of the cost of education at a state institution. Such grants increase access to postsecondary education

The William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) Program

The William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) program was created in 1979 as the

¹ s. 67, ch. 79-222, L.O.F.

² These programs include the Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program (s. 1009.51, F.S.), the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (ss. 1009.53-1009.538, F.S.), the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (s. 1009.89, F.S.), and the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program (s. 1009.891, F.S.).

³ s. 1009.89, F.S.

⁴ s. 1009.891, F.S.

State Tuition Voucher program and was renamed the Florida Resident Access Grant program in 1994. In 1998, the program was named in memory of William L. Boyd, IV,⁵ who served as general counsel for the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF). FRAG awards are available to students at 28 independent, non-profit Florida colleges and universities which are chartered by the state, have a secular purpose, and are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

As its name indicates, the purpose of FRAG is to provide Florida residents access to postsecondary education. The statute creating the program states a legislative finding that “independent, nonprofit colleges and universities eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant Program are an integral part of the higher education system in this state and that a significant number of state residents choose this form of higher education.”⁶ The statute provides a second legislative finding that “a strong and viable system of independent nonprofit colleges and universities reduces the tax burden on the citizens of the state.”⁷ Thus, the two purposes of the program are to provide access to a postsecondary degree and to do so at a reduced cost to the state. There are no measures in place to permit the state to determine whether the program is meeting these goals.

In 2003, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) conducted a justification review of the Private Colleges and Universities Program in the Department of Education (DOE) which includes the FRAG program. As required by s. 11.513, F.S., the review assesses agency performance measures, evaluates program performance, and identifies policy alternatives for improving services and reducing costs. In the 2003 review, OPPAGA found that “the program’s impact on reducing taxpayer costs cannot be determined using available data.”⁸ The review found that while FRAG tuition assistance costs the state less per student than the state cost of educating the student at a public institution, the state would only realize a cost savings for those students who would have attended a public institution if they had not received a FRAG grant. It is

not known whether students would have enrolled in a private institution if FRAG were not available.

Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program

The Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE) Grant Program was created in 2003⁹ to provide tuition assistance to full-time Florida resident students seeking a baccalaureate degree at two types of private institutions: 1) Florida for-profit institutions which are chartered by the state, have a secular purpose, and are accredited by SACS, and 2) nonprofit postsecondary institutions chartered out of the state yet located in the state for 10 years or more and accredited by a regional accrediting agency. The schools may not be a state university or community college and must have a secular purpose.

The annual amount of the grant is established in the General Appropriations Act but is contingent on funding. The program was funded in the 2004-2005 fiscal year, and the first recipients of ABLE grants were students enrolled in the fall of 2004.

The charts below show the award histories for the FRAG program over the past five years¹⁰ and the ABLE program over the past two years:¹¹

⁵ s. 9, ch. 98-71, and s. 14, ch. 98-398, L.O.F.

⁶ s. 1009.98(1), F.S.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Justification Review: Private Colleges and Universities Program, Department of Education Report No. 03-70, December 2003.* p. 5.

⁹ ch. 2003-65, L.O.F.

¹⁰ Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance. *Annual report to the Commissioner 2005-06.* p. 31.

¹¹ *Id.* p. 33.

William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant					
Year	Students Awarded	Average Award*	Maximum Award	Expended Funds	Appropriations
2001-02	31,548	\$2,217	\$2,686	\$69,940,547	\$70,830,388
2002-03	33,459	\$2,315	\$2,686	\$77,465,847	\$79,841,350
2003-04	35,462	\$1,949	\$2,251	\$69,108,622	\$79,841,350
2004-05	35,502	\$2,049	\$2,369	\$72,726,239	\$79,841,350
2005-06	36,212	\$2,462	\$2,850	\$89,142,191	\$93,990,150

*Average awards may be less than the maximum award due to student need or may be prorated to accommodate all eligible applicants.

Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program					
Year	Students Awarded	Average Award	Maximum Award	Expended Funds	Appropriations
2004-05	949	\$1,100	\$1,500.00	\$1,043,750	\$1,800,000
2005-06	2,686	\$ 876	\$1,155.69	\$2,353,445	\$3,600,000

The charts below show the undergraduate tuition and fees for institutions in the State University System, FRAG institutions, and ABLE institutions:

2007-2008 State University Tuition and Fees	
State University	Tuition and fees for 30 undergraduate hours
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	\$3,264.50
Florida Atlantic University	\$3,486.90
Florida Gulf Coast University	\$3,646.80
Florida International University	\$3,284.30
Florida State University	\$3,354.90
New College of Florida	\$3,143.40
University of Central Florida	\$3,561.60
University of Florida	\$3,256.50
University of North Florida	\$3,491.10
University of South Florida	\$3,456.50
University of West Florida	\$3,351.30
Average SUS Undergraduate Tuition and Fees	\$3,390.71

Source: Office of Planning and Institutional Research, State University System, 2007.

2007-2008 Tuition and Fees at FRAG Institutions	
Institution	Undergraduate tuition and fees for one academic year
Barry University	\$24,500
Beacon College	\$24,950
Bethune-Cookman College	\$12,382
Clearwater Christian College	\$13,160
Eckerd College	\$28,860
Edward Waters College	\$ 9,176
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	\$25,400
Flagler College	\$11,810
Florida College	\$11,000
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	\$ 6,120
Florida Institute of Technology	\$28,920
Florida Memorial University	\$24,508
Florida Southern College	\$21,190
Hodges University (formerly International College)	\$10,580
Jacksonville University	\$22,500

2007-2008 Tuition and Fees at FRAG Institutions	
Institution	Undergraduate tuition and fees for one academic year
Lynn University	\$26,990
Nova Southeastern University	\$18,950
Palm Beach Atlantic University	\$19,950
Ringling School of Art and Design	\$25,946
Rollins College	\$32,640
Saint Leo University	\$15,820
St. Thomas University	\$19,680
Southeastern University	\$12,360
Stetson University	\$28,780
University of Miami	\$32,966
University of Tampa	\$19,700
Warner Southern College	\$13,968
Webber International University	\$16,760
Average tuition and fees for FRAG institutions	\$19,984

Source: Data reported to the Office of Student Financial Assistance by the institutions.

2007-08 Tuition and Fees at ABLE Institutions	
Institution	Undergraduate tuition and fees for one academic year
Belhaven College	\$ 8,670
Carlos Albizu University	\$ 7,406
Columbia College	\$ 4,920
Johnson & Wales University	\$21,462
Keiser University	\$13,024
Miami International University of Art and Design	\$21,216
National Louis University	\$14,760
Northwood University	\$16,455
South University—West Palm Beach Campus	\$12,570
Springfield College Tampa	\$ 7,992
Trinity International University	\$ 9,000
Union Institute and University	\$ 9,848
Average tuition and fees for ABLE institutions	\$12,276

Source: Data reported to the Office of Student Financial Assistance by the institutions.

The following tables show the enrollment at ICUF and ABLE institutions in fall 2006 and the total number of students who received a FRAG or ABLE grant at each institution during the 2006-2007 academic year:

Undergraduate Enrollment and FRAG Awards at Participating Institutions		
Institution	Fall 2006 undergraduate enrollment	Total number of FRAG awards in 2006-2007
Barry University	5,355	3,069
Beacon College	114	29
Bethune-Cookman College	3,093	1,626
Clearwater Christian College	586	285
Eckerd College	2,555	738
Edward Waters College	842	540
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	4,473	1,136
Flagler College	2,246	1,991
Florida College	513	159
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	2,086	535
Florida Institute of Technology	2,365	694
Florida Memorial University	1,784	1,024
Florida Southern College	2,441	1,340
Hodges University (formerly International College)	1,454	1,293
Jacksonville University	2,699	1,074
Lynn University	2,300	466
Nova Southeastern University	5,413	3,009
Palm Beach Atlantic University	2,524	1,617
Ringling College of Art and Design	1,090	462
Rollins College	2,744	1,522
Saint Leo University	12,935	2,451
St. Thomas University	1,155	936
Southeastern University	2,810	1,399
Stetson University	2,273	1,618
University of Miami	10,509	4,573
University of Tampa	4,745	1,474
Warner Southern College	915	873
Webber International University	560	397

Sources: Enrollment data from ICUF Accountability Report, 2007; FRAG awards data from DOE Office of Student Financial Assistance End-of-Year Report 2006-2007.

Undergraduate Enrollment and ABL Grant Recipients at Participating Institutions		
Institution	Fall 2006 Enrollment	ABLE Grant Recipients 2006-2007
Belhaven College	2,238	N/A
Carlos Albizu University	195	192
Columbia College	556	282
Johnson & Wales University	2,085	281
Keiser University	5,877	856
Miami International University of Art and Design	1,906	1,010
National Louis University	1,484	56
Northwood University	784	202
South University—West Palm Beach Campus	900	614
Springfield College Tampa	169	N/A
Trinity International University	55	44
Union Institute and University	740	156

Source: Data reported to the Office of Student Financial Assistance by the institutions.

METHODOLOGY

To provide the committee with information concerning the performance of private postsecondary institutions that enroll students who are supported by state-funded tuition assistance, committee staff surveyed institutions that meet the criteria for participation in the FRAG and ABLE grant programs. The survey questions concerned admissions criteria, graduation rates, and the time required to earn a degree. Committee staff consulted with Department of Education staff, institutional research directors, and ICUF staff to obtain data concerning the FRAG and ABLE grants and performance data concerning those programs.

FINDINGS

Committee staff sent surveys to the 28 private postsecondary institutions that participate in the FRAG program and the 12 institutions that participate in the ABLE grant program requesting data on all of their baccalaureate degree students, not just recipients of the tuition assistance. Twenty-three of the 28 FRAG institutions and 7 of the 12 ABLE institutions returned surveys. The data include the mean SAT scores and grade point averages of students admitted in Fall 2006 and the 4-year and 6-year graduation rates of the students who enrolled for the first time in 2000. The surveys revealed the following data:

William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant Institutions				
Institution	Mean SAT score	Mean High School Grade Point Average	Graduation Rate In 4 years/6 years	
Barry University	970	3.41	23%	34%
Bethune-Cookman University	813	2.74	13%	33%
Clearwater Christian College	1010	3.3	39%	46%
Eckerd College	1114	3.29	53%	59%
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	1082	3.28	35%	61%
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	N/A	3.05	33%	67%
Florida Institute of Technology	1162	3.49	40%	57%
Florida Memorial University	868	2.59	16%	28%
Florida Southern College	1061	3.51	41%	56%
Hodges University	N/A	N/A	9%	27%
Lynn University	911	2.64	26%	34%
Nova Southeastern University	1009	3.54	34%	42%
Palm Beach Atlantic University	1086	3.51	35%	47%
Ringling College of Art and Design	N/A	3.8	51%	56%
Rollins College	1176	3.4	59%	69%
Saint Leo University	1007.5	3.18	31%	43%
St. Thomas University	860	2.93	21%	34%
Southeastern University	998	3.4	24%	35%
Stetson University	1132	3.76	53%	63%
University of Miami	1270	4.1	58%	73%
University of Tampa	1093	3.28	45%	55%
Warner Southern College	923	3.18	20%	27%
Webber International University	919	3.22	35%	41%

Beacon College, Edward Waters College, Flagler College, Florida College, and Jacksonville University did not reply to the survey.

Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program				
Institution	Mean SAT score	Mean High School Grade Point Average	Graduation Rate In 4 years/6 years	
Carlos Albizu University	N/A	N/A	N/A	93%
Columbia College	N/A	N/A	30%	46%
Johnson & Wales University	900	2.81	32%	40%
Keiser University	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Miami International University of Art and Design	N/A	N/A	36%	78%
South University—West Palm Beach Campus	N/A	N/A	N/A	40%
Trinity International University	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Belhaven College, National Louis University, Northwood University, Springfield College Tampa, and Union Institute and University did not reply to the survey.

Most of the institutions participating in the ABLE grant program use admission criteria other than SAT scores and grade point averages—such as high school diplomas or GEDs, portfolios, letters of recommendation, faculty interviews, work experience, and college entrance exams. In the chart above, the graduation rate measured by a first-time-in-college (FTIC) cohort is not applicable to an institution like Keiser University which did not offer baccalaureate degrees in 2000, and is not a meaningful indicator of success for a university like Carlos Albizu University

where only 15% of the students enter as FTIC freshmen. In order to establish meaningful measures of the success of these institutions in providing access to baccalaureate degrees, the state would have to establish measures pertinent to the populations served and the degrees they earn.

For purposes of comparison, data concerning student achievement prior to entering the university and state university graduation rates are included below:

Florida State Universities				
Institution	Mean SAT score	Mean Grade Point Average	Graduation Rate In 4 years/6 years	
Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University	922	3.0	18.9%	41.4%
Florida Atlantic University	1052	3.3	13.2%	35.3%
Florida Gulf Coast University	1030	3.4	13.1%	32.4%
Florida International University	1134	3.6	18.0%	45.3%
Florida State University	1206	3.7	43.8%	67.2%
New College of Florida*	1332	3.9	N/A	N/A
University of Central Florida	1201	3.7	29.4%	56.5%
University of Florida	1274	4.1	52.9%	78.7%
University of North Florida	1166	3.6	19.9%	44.3%
University of South Florida	1131	3.6	19.4%	46.3%
University of West Florida	1070	3.5	16.1%	37.0%

Source: Florida Board of Governors, September 2007.

* In 2000, New College was part of the University of South Florida. Graduation rates are not available for a 2000 cohort.

Performance of ABLE Grant Program Participants

Though the ABLE program has been funded for only two years, five institutions reported a total of 752 bachelor's degrees awarded to ABLE recipients during that two-year period, as follows:

Columbia College	151
Johnson & Wales University	188
Keiser University	196
Miami International University of Art & Design	75
South University, West Palm Beach	142
TOTAL Degrees	752

The percentages of ABLE recipients who either graduated with a bachelor's degree or remained enrolled in the institution in 2007 are provided below:

Carlos Albizu University	NA
Columbia College	81.7%
Johnson and Wales University	71.2%
Keiser University	82.3%
Miami International University of Art	

& Design	62.2%
South University,	
West Palm Beach	66.7%
Trinity University	N/A

Performance of FRAG Recipients

According to ICUF's annual accountability report, during the 2005-2006 academic year, 7,293 bachelor's degrees were awarded to FRAG recipients; of those, 43 percent were awarded to minority students.¹² Men earned 35 percent of those degrees and women earned 65 percent of the degrees. According to the DOE's Long-range Program Plan (LRPP) report, the 6-year graduation rate of students who first received a FRAG award in 2000-2001 was 61 percent.¹³ That rate includes the students who graduated from ICUF institutions (57 percent) and those who transferred to, and graduated from, public institutions (4 percent).

¹² The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. *2006-2007 Accountability Report: Quality, Productivity, Diversity, and Access*. 2007. p. 53.

¹³ Long Range Program Plans Measures and Standards—Department of Education Data for 2006-2007.

The percentage of FRAG recipients who entered the institution in fall 2000, who either graduated with a bachelor's degree or remained enrolled at their institutions in 2006, is as follows:¹⁴

Barry University	40%
Beacon College	N/A
Bethune-Cookman University	N/A
Clearwater Christian College	37%
Eckerd College	56%
Edward Waters College	17%
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	57%
Flagler College	73%
Florida College	N/A
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	56%
Florida Institute of Technology	55%
Florida Memorial University	25%
Florida Southern College	61%
Hodges University	N/A
Jacksonville University	N/A
Lynn University	N/A
Nova Southeastern University	63%
Palm Beach Atlantic University	57%
Ringling College of Art and Design	N/A
Rollins College	74%
Saint Leo University	33%
St. Thomas University	36%
Southeastern University	N/A
Stetson University	66%
University of Miami	80%
University of Tampa	N/A
Warner Southern College	21%
Webber International University	47%

The academic history of the FRAG recipients who left these private institutions before graduating is not known. They could have dropped out of college or finished their degrees at another institution.

State Performance Measures

At present, aggregate information concerning performance of ICUF institutions is collected by the DOE and published in the agency's LRPP. Until 2006, the Legislature set performance standards for ICUF institutions in the General Appropriations Act. Prior to 2006, the Legislature set benchmarks for the six-year graduation rate for first time in college FRAG award recipients (50 percent), retention rate of award recipients (53 percent), and the number of degrees

awarded to award recipients. Standards were not established for other measures such as income and placement rates. With revisions to ch. 216, F.S., in 2006,¹⁵ agencies must maintain a comprehensive performance accountability system including a list of performance measures and standards that are adopted by the Legislature.¹⁶ The current DOE long-range program plan contains the measures that were last adopted by the Legislature in 2006,¹⁷ with one exception: the DOE database does not include information concerning first-time-in-college ICUF students and the LRPP report uses a cohort of first-time FRAG recipients as a proxy for that measure. The Legislature did not set performance standards for the ABLE grant program, and thus, this program is not included in the LRPP report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature has previously set performance measures and benchmarks for certain grant award programs such as FRAG. If the Legislature chooses to establish measures of performance for the private postsecondary institutions that participate in the FRAG and ABLE tuition assistance programs, the Legislature should codify those measures and benchmarks to evaluate the return on the state's investment and the effectiveness of the programs in meeting state expectations.

In order to set the standards, the Legislature may need to improve data collection with respect to award recipients by institution. The data would assist the Legislature and the participating institutions in setting reasonable measures and benchmarks.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 83.

¹⁵ ch. 2006-122, L.O.F.

¹⁶ s. 216.1827, F.S.

¹⁷ *Performance Measures and Standards Approved by the Legislature for fiscal year 2006-2007*. May 2, 2006. readable at: <http://www.flsenate.gov/data/session/2006/senate/appbills/pdf/2006Standards.pdf>