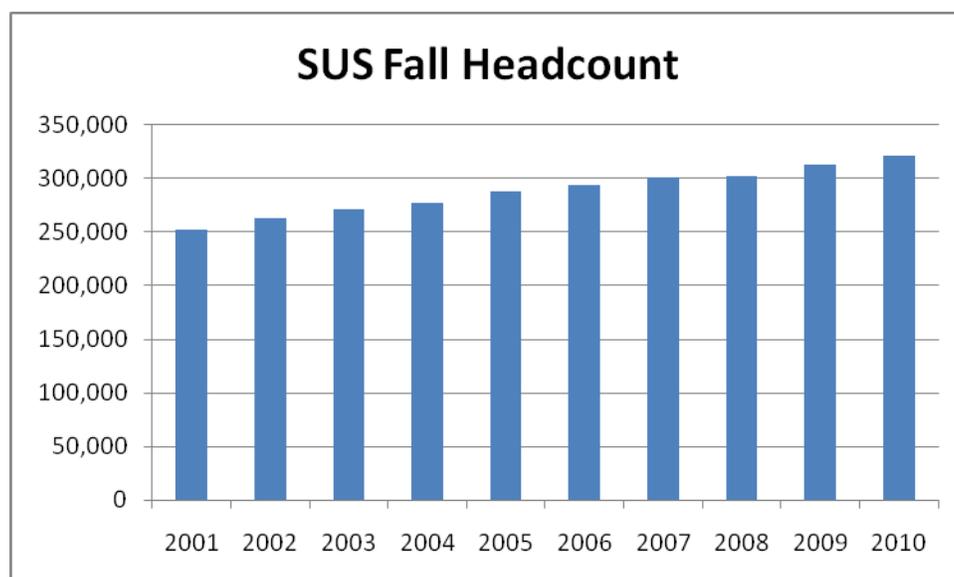




Increasing Student Access and Improving Graduation Rates 2012-13 Legislative Budget Request \$61.5 Million

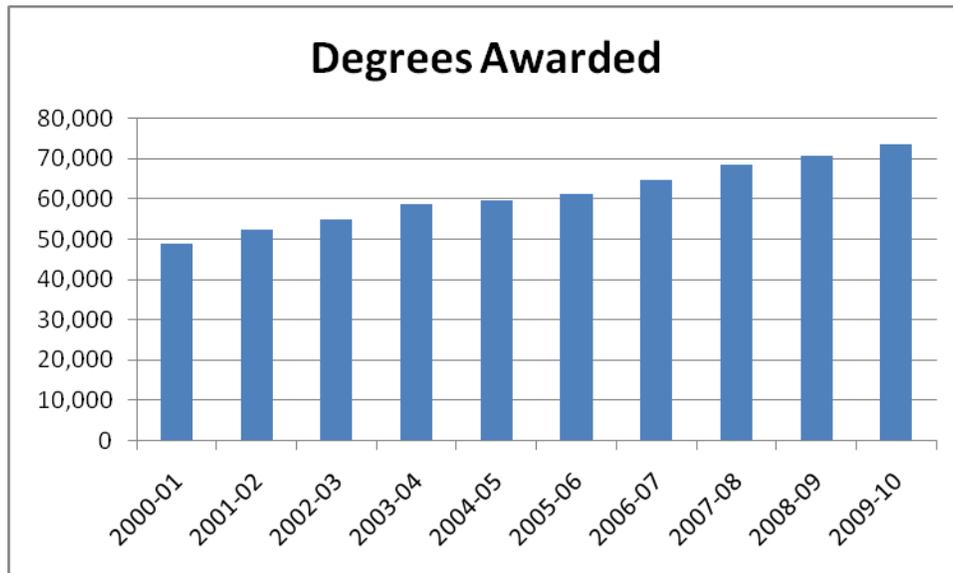
The State University System has recognized the need to restructure Florida's economy into an economy built on knowledge and innovation. Within the past few years, the System has campaigned for a more energized approach to delivering the message that Florida's economy is better sustained by high-technology, high-wage jobs in targeted degrees and degrees needed for regional and statewide development. With the implementation of the New Florida Initiative, this effort will be welcomed by state officials as new and innovative ideas are targeted by university administrators to increase student access in fields needed for economic and strategic growth while improving graduation rates at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Even with declining state support, universities have continued to provide access to Florida's citizens. Over the last 10 years, enrollment has increased at an average rate of 2.8 percent annually. Although several universities have reached an adequate level of enrollment, several of the universities, such as FGCU, are continuing to grow and provide student access to meet the continued workforce demand.



While enrollments have increased 28 percent over the last 10 years, degree production has grown by 50 percent. The SUS is committed to producing quality

degrees to meet the state's workforce demand. One of the keys to increasing degree production is to improve graduation and retention rates.

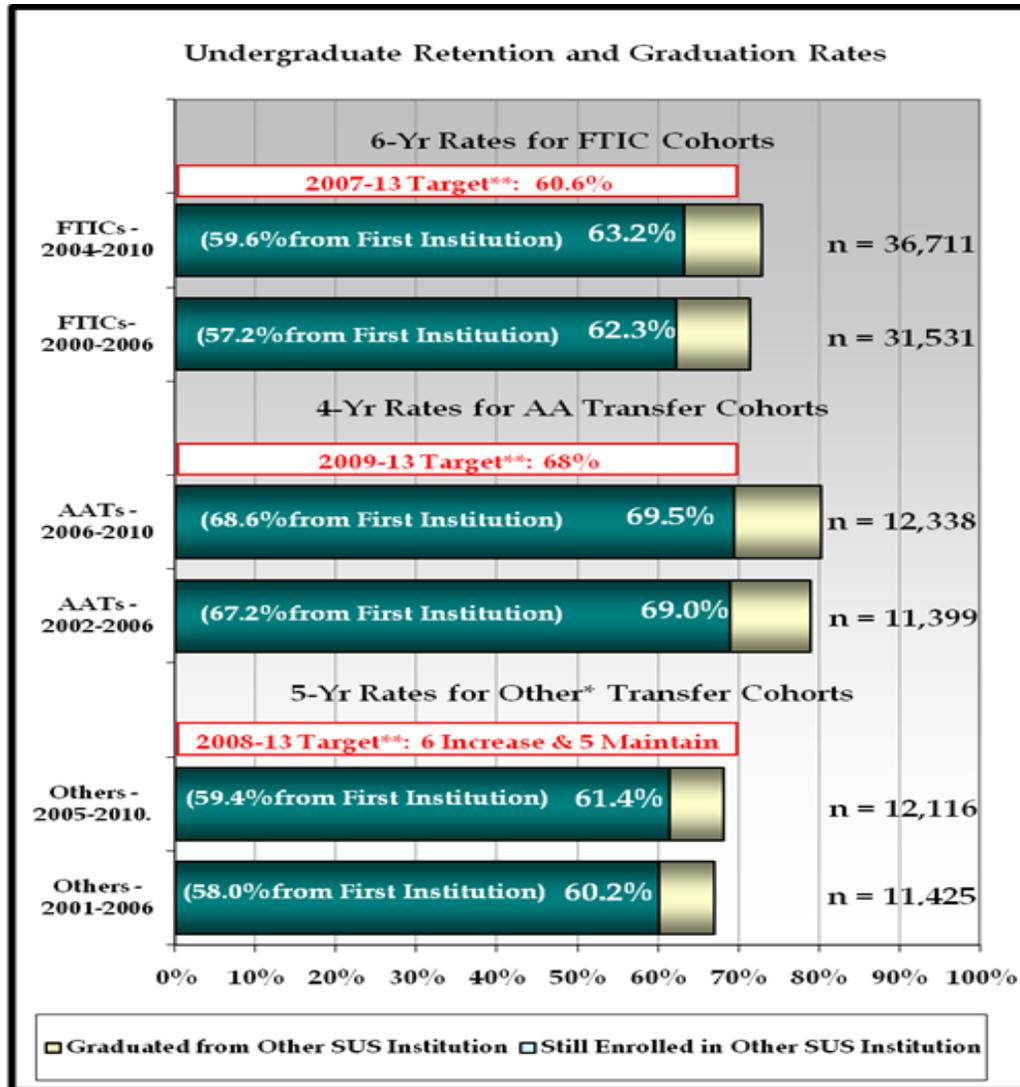


As part of the 2011 University Work Plan instructions, universities were asked to align legislative budget request (LBR) issues with institutional goals and metrics. Several of the issues submitted by each university were identified in the universities' Work Plan as primary institutional goals. For the 2012-13 LBR, of the \$150 million earmarked for the New Florida Initiative, close to \$55 million¹ in LBR proposals were submitted by the universities to improve student access, graduation rates, and other special initiatives.

For example, one university's approach to improving its graduation rates involves a series of targeted initiatives including an Academic Advising Enhancement Project – designed for sophomore retention efforts. Another initiative, the Education and General "Pilot Programs", provides competitive three-year "grants" to faculty for specific enhancements to the undergraduate student experience. As a result of these initiatives, and several others, the university reports improvement of first-year retention rates from 87.1% (2008 cohort) to 87.9% (2011 cohort); six-year graduate rates from 63.1% (2003-09 cohort) to 65.7% (2007-13 cohort).

A continued investment in student tracking and advising will ensure that students take the appropriate courses, avoid excess hours, and graduate in a timely manner so that they can enter the work force.

¹ An additional \$6.5 million is recommended for system issues thus bringing the total to \$61.5 million.



In addition, system issues for the Florida Critical Languages Network (\$.5 M), Auxiliary Learning Aids (\$.5 M), Florida Distance Learning Consortium (\$.4 M), and FACTS.org, (\$.3 M) are being requested; along with continued support for implementation of the FIU and UCF medical schools and academic infrastructure for NCF.

Although the Board has not officially approved individual university or system-wide LBR issues, the general intent of the Board is to collaborate with each university to develop a comprehensive plan for improving graduation rates and student access activities throughout the system. This would allow universities to develop well-defined institutional goals unique to each university's strategic plan along with expected outcome and accountability measures and assumptions. The main objective of this process is to ensure that appropriated funds provided for this purpose are used in the most efficient and effective way intended while examining the return on investment to the state. Any funds appropriated by the Legislature for this purpose would be allocated by the Board based on various established accountability metrics.