



Path to Preeminence: Five-year Benchmarking Plan

University of Central Florida

July 2016

In 2016, the University of Central Florida was designated as an emerging preeminent state research university by the authority of Florida Statute 1001.7065. Subsection (5)(b) requires that a state university designated as an emerging preeminent state research university submit to the Board of Governors a five-year benchmark plan with target rankings on key performance metrics for national excellence.

UCF’s plan will achieve full preeminence within five years.

In addition to the state’s preeminent metrics, another indicator of national excellence is the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. In 2015, when Carnegie released updated rankings, UCF maintained the highest possible ranking of R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest Research Activity. This ranking was awarded to only 2.5 percent of all evaluated institutions and was achieved by only 81 public institutions. Additionally, UCF is one of only 47 public institutions that pairs Carnegie’s highest research activity classification with its optional Carnegie Community Engagement Classification of “Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships.” The pairing of these classifications is recognition of UCF’s commitment to teaching, research, and service.

Preeminence Metrics Achieved

In 2016, UCF achieved six of the 12 preeminent metrics as defined in Florida Statute 1001.7065 qualifying UCF for the “Emerging Preeminence” designation. The six metrics are detailed in Table 1, including current performance and annual projections over the next five years.

UCF newly approved strategic plan, UCF Collective Impact, has embedded the preeminent metrics among the various goals included within the plan.

The university and its leadership will remain diligent in the continued improvement of our performance in these six metrics.

	BENCH-MARK	2016 ACTUAL	2021 GOAL
Average GPA and SAT Score <i>for incoming freshman in Fall semester</i>	4.0 GPA 1200 SAT	4.0 1261 <small>Fall 2015</small>	4.1 1273 <small>Fall 2020</small>
6-year Graduation Rate <i>Full-time, FTIC</i>	70%	70.4% <small>2009-15</small>	75% <small>2014-20</small>
Non-Medical Science & Engineering Research Expenditures (\$M)	\$150 M	\$168 <small>2014-15</small>	\$202 <small>2019-20</small>
National Ranking in S.T.E.M. Research Expenditures <i>includes public and private institutions</i>	Top 100 in 5 of 8 disciplines	7 <small>2013-14</small>	7 <small>2018-19</small>
Patents Awarded <i>over 3-year period</i>	100	179 <small>2013-15</small>	245 <small>2018-20</small>
Doctoral Degrees Awarded Annually	400	423 <small>2014-15</small>	490 <small>2019-20</small>



Metrics That Require Steady Work

This plan outlines how UCF will achieve an additional five metrics (for a total of 11 of 12) to attain the full preeminent state research university designation in 2021. Table 2 details the metrics where UCF's performance is below the preeminent benchmark as of 2016. The table also presents current performance and annual projections for the each of the metrics over the next five years.

Public University National Ranking

The preeminent benchmark requires two top 50 rankings among public institutions. This benchmark aligns with the Florida Board of Governors' 2025 System Strategic Plan for the State University System that calls for five institutions to be in the Top 50 by 2025. UCF currently has one ranking in the top 50 among public institutions. Kiplinger's (2015) "Best Values in Public Education" lists UCF as number 36.

UCF is ranked 54th among public institutions by *Washington Monthly's* "College Guide Rankings 2015 – National Universities." *Washington Monthly's* rankings incorporate social mobility for low-income students, quality scholarship, and public service. With UCF's continued commitment to access through DirectConnect to UCF, our advances in research expenditures, and our demonstrated focus on community engagement make achieving a top 50 by *Washington Monthly* a realistic near-term goal.

UCF is ranked 91st among public institutions by *U.S. News & World Report's* "Best Colleges" (2016). To better understand our performance, UCF conducted an in-depth review and generated a metric by metric breakdown. We also limited the comparison benchmark to only include the 81 public R1 institutions. The breakdown of this ranking shows that **UCF is already performing in the Top 50 in all student quality and outcome performance metrics**. Areas needing improvement include financial resources (benefiting from additional state allocations), faculty resources (benefiting from new tenure and tenure-track faculty lines), and peer assessment score.

The projected target for this metric is to achieve three top 50 rankings by 2021.

Freshman Retention Rate

The preeminent benchmark requires a 90 percent freshman retention rate. UCF achieved an 89.1 percent freshmen retention rate in 2016 (2014-15 cohort). Improving this metric remains a critical goal within UCF's 2016-17 Work Plan and also is embedded within UCF's Challenge 2020 (internal targets set by each college) and as a metric in UCF's Collective Impact strategic plan.

UCF has six major initiatives focused on improving student success by focusing on themes such as mapping and tracking, predictive analytics, intensive advising, consortia networking, and re-imagining the first year. These activities represent \$3.6 million in new recurring investments toward scholarships,

	BENCH-MARK	2016 ACTUAL	2021 GOAL
Public University National Ranking <i>in more than one national ranking</i>	Top 50	1 2016	3 2021
Freshman Retention Rate <i>Full-time, FTIC</i>	90%	89% 2014-15	92% 2016-17
National Academy Memberships	6	1 2016	6 2021
Science & Engineering Research Expenditures (\$M)	\$200 M	\$170 2014-15	\$218 2019-20
Number of Post-Doctoral Appointees	200	55 Fall 2012	120 Fall 2017 205 Fall 2020
Endowment Size (\$M)	\$500 M	\$151 2014-15	\$215.0 2019-20



personnel, and software licenses. Additionally, \$1.5 million in new grant funding is providing critical resources toward retention projects. The projected target for freshman retention is 92 percent by 2021.

National Academy Memberships

The preeminent benchmark requires six national academy memberships. UCF had one national academy member as of 2016 (Fall 2015) and has secured a second member, who will begin in Fall 2016. The metric is embedded within the Faculty Prominence section of UCF's Collective Impact plan. Additional tenure-track faculty lines funded through Performance Based Funding and Emerging Preeminence allocations will allow UCF to recruit additional National Academy members and complementary additional tenure-track faculty members of all levels. UCF has committed \$3 million toward National Academy recruitment during fiscal year 2017 (\$1.2 million from preeminent funding). The projection for this metric is six National Academy members by 2021.

Science and Engineering Research Expenditures

The preeminent benchmark requires \$200 million in science and engineering research expenditures. UCF had \$170 million in science and engineering research expenditures as of 2016 (2014-15 fiscal year). One of the key charges in the university's Collective Impact strategic plan includes a goal of doubling research awards by 2021 and becoming a top 50 research university by 2035.

UCF has achieved two related preeminent metrics with \$150 million in non-medical science and engineering research expenditures and seven of eight research disciplines with expenditures in the top 100 among both public and private institutions. Achieving these metrics demonstrates UCF's national performance in STEM-research expenditures. Additionally, 58 percent of all new faculty lines (121 of 209) allocated in the past two years have been directed to science- and engineering-focused colleges, translating to a new recurring investment of \$14.5 million. The projection for total science and engineering research expenditures is \$218 million by 2021.

Post-Doctoral Appointees

The preeminent benchmark requires 200 post-doctoral appointees. UCF had 55 reported post-doctoral appointees in 2016 (Fall 2012 data). During Fall 2015 there were 68 post-doctoral appointees on campus. The metric is embedded within the Research Engagement section of the UCF Collective Impact strategic plan. UCF allocated nearly 40 percent (\$1.9 million) of its first year emerging preeminence funds into initiatives designed to revitalize and grow our post-doctoral appointees program. The projection for this metric is to steadily increase and have 205 post-doctoral appointees on campus by 2021.

Endowment Size

The preeminent benchmark requires \$500 million in endowment. UCF had \$151 million in endowment in 2016 (2014-15 fiscal year). UCF is committed to growing our endowment and is currently engaged in a \$500 million capital campaign publically announced in early September. UCF's Collective Impact strategic plan has set targets related to endowment, overall donor count, and increasing the volume of annual large gifts. The projection for this metric is \$215 million in 2021, and we do not anticipate meeting the preeminent benchmark.



UCF's Strategic Plan

UCF Collective Impact declares that “we use the power of scale and the pursuit of excellence to solve tomorrow’s greatest challenges and to make a better future for our students and society. Through learning, discovery, and partnerships, we transform lives and livelihoods.”

The plan continues by detailing “Our Promise” as the following.

- Harness the power of scale to transform lives and livelihoods.
- Attract and cultivate exceptional and diverse faculty, students, and staff whose collective contributions strengthen us.
- Deploy our distinctive assets to solve society’s greatest challenges.
- Create partnership at every level that amplify our academic, economic, social, and cultural impact and reputation.
- Innovate academic, operational, and financial models to transform higher education.

UCF Collective Impact also provides “Our Charge” for the next five years and through 2035. “Our Promise” and related charges provide the foundation and direction for UCF to drive improvements in strategic areas. As UCF continues to pursue excellence, attainment of additional preeminence metrics will be a byproduct of our everyday advances.

Conclusion

The University of Central Florida is grateful to Governor Scott, the Florida Legislature, and the Board of Governors for their support of the preeminent and emerging preeminent programs. The designation enhances UCF’s national prominence and demonstrates the state’s commitment to nurture the best higher education system in the nation.