

**STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

June 28, 2024

SUBJECT: Programs of Strategic Emphasis Tuition and Fee Waiver: Update

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Consider approval of a new program for the Programs of Strategic Emphasis Tuition and Fee Waiver to replace Physics.

AUTHORITY FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACTION

Article IX, Section 7, Florida Constitution

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Section 1009.26(18)(a), Florida Statutes, requires that for every course in a qualifying program of strategic emphasis in which a student is enrolled, a state university must waive 100 percent of the tuition and fees for an equivalent course in such program. Florida statute requires the Board of Governors to select ten programs of strategic emphasis that include eight programs in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) and two degree programs that meet critical workforce needs. The Board is also required to identify two state-approved teacher preparation programs for the waiver.

Eligible students must be in-state residents, earn at least 60 semester credit hours towards a baccalaureate degree within two academic years after initial enrollment at a Florida public postsecondary institution, and be enrolled in one of the twelve Programs of Strategic Emphasis selected by the Board of Governors. The tuition and fee waiver applies only for upper-level courses and for up to 110 percent of the required credit hours of the degree program for which the student is enrolled.

At the November 2023 meeting, the Board of Governors approved a new Programs of Strategic Emphasis list that goes into effect for the 2024-2025 Academic Year. Physics is not on the updated list, but it was one of the eight STEM programs selected by the Board for the Programs of Strategic Emphasis Waiver. As a result, the Board must choose another STEM program from the new Programs of Strategic Emphasis list for the waiver program. The statute requires that students who have been granted the waiver for physics continue receiving the waiver until they graduate, exceed the number of allowable credit hours, or withdraw from the program.

Board staff identified three programs that meet the requirements in statute to replace physics. The three programs are Biology, Environmental/Health Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. Similar to the prior methodology used to identify the other STEM programs and critical workforce needs programs, Board staff evaluated the eligible programs using enrollment and workforce need.

If approved by the Strategic Planning Committee, the new STEM program selected for the waiver will be forwarded to the full Board for consideration.

Supporting Documentation Included: In Strategic Planning Committee Materials