

# Professional & Graduate Degree Excellence Program Report

January 2020

**PENDING BOG APPROVAL**



# **SUMMARY OF STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL & GRADUATE DEGREE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

**January 2020**

## **Introduction**

The Legislature established the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program to support the efforts of the State University System (SUS) institutions to enhance the quality and excellence of professional and graduate schools in the areas of medicine, law, and business. In addition, the Program is intended to expand the economic impact of state universities. Section 1004.6498, Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Board of Governors to summarize and submit information from the State University System institutions on the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program by March 15 each year. The statute requires that the report include information on program expenditures; first-time pass rates on the United States Medical Licensing Examination; first-time pass rates on the Florida Bar Examination; the percentage of graduates enrolled or employed that reflects the added value of a graduate-level business degree; the advancement in the rankings of medicine, law, and graduate-level programs; and the added economic benefit of the universities to the state.

The Legislature provided funding to SUS institutions for the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program in fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19.<sup>1</sup> However, section 1004.6498, Florida Statutes, which established the program and the reporting requirements, was not signed into law until March of 2018. This report provides information on how the SUS institutions spent funds in FY 2018-19. Recruiting faculty and research scholars can often take longer than a year, and the timing of hiring individuals may depend on a variety of factors. Other metrics such as exam passage rates, employment outcomes, rankings, and economic benefit to the state often take a few years to demonstrate improvements as data collection and reporting timeframes may lag a year or two behind the academic year.

The State University System includes six medical schools, four law schools, and ten institutions with graduate-level business programs.<sup>2</sup> These institutions received funding based on prior performance on indicators such as licensure exam pass rates, employment outcomes, and the number of graduates. In 2018-19, SUS institutions

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<sup>1</sup> Funding was also provided in the 2019-20 fiscal year, and information related to that year will be included in the 2021 report.

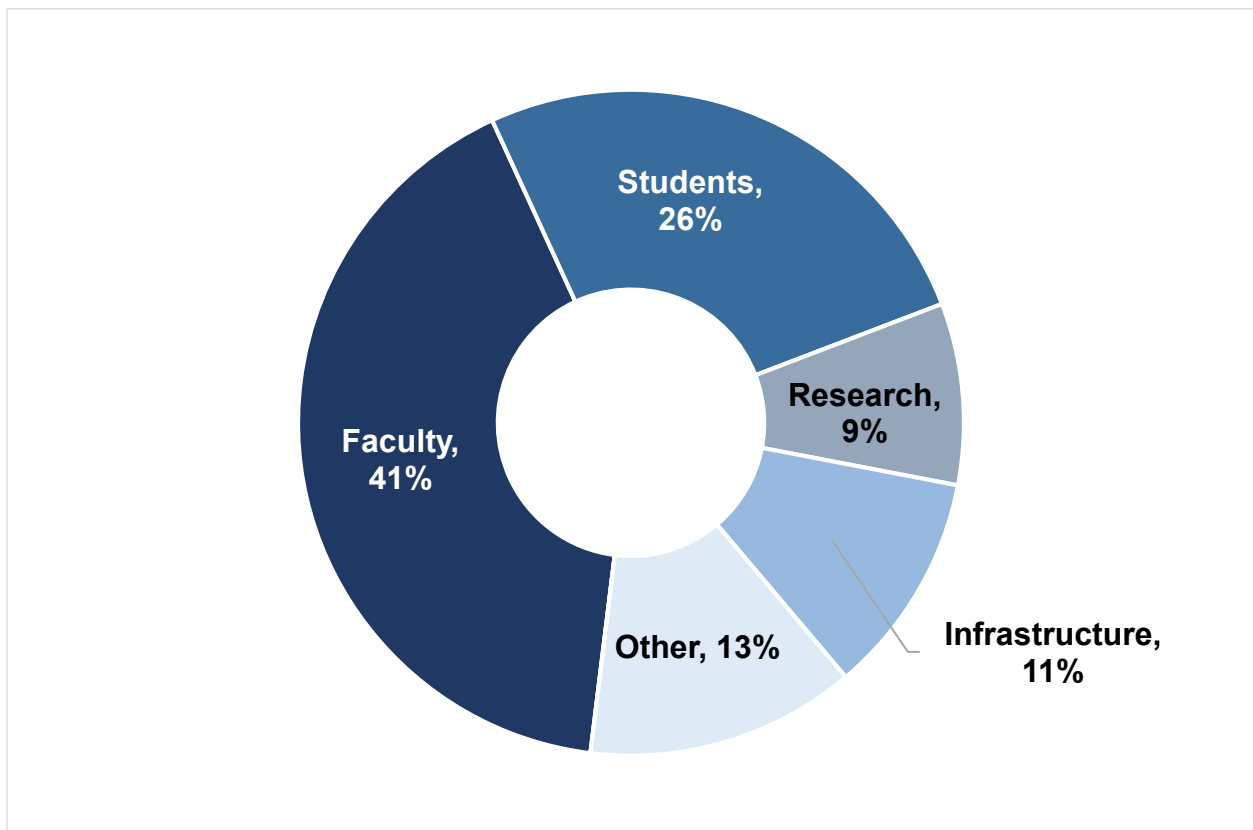
<sup>2</sup> New College of Florida and Florida Polytechnic University did not receive allocations for this program, as neither has a college of medicine, law, or graduate-level business program.

awarded 702 medical degrees, 774 law degrees, and 4,793 graduate-level business degrees. Appendix A provides details of these awards by institution.

## Expenditure Information

Most of the funds from the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program were used to recruit and retain faculty and support student success initiatives. The Legislature provided funding of \$60 million to the SUS institutions in 2018-19 to support the program. Of this, 41% was used to recruit and retain faculty and 26% was used to support students through a variety of mechanisms. Some examples of the student support activities include financial aid, licensure examination preparation, career placement, and advising. Other activities varied across the medicine, law, and business categories. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of how SUS institutions spent or allocated the funds for the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program in FY 2018-19.

**Exhibit 1**  
**SUS Expenditures of Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program Funds, 2018-2019**

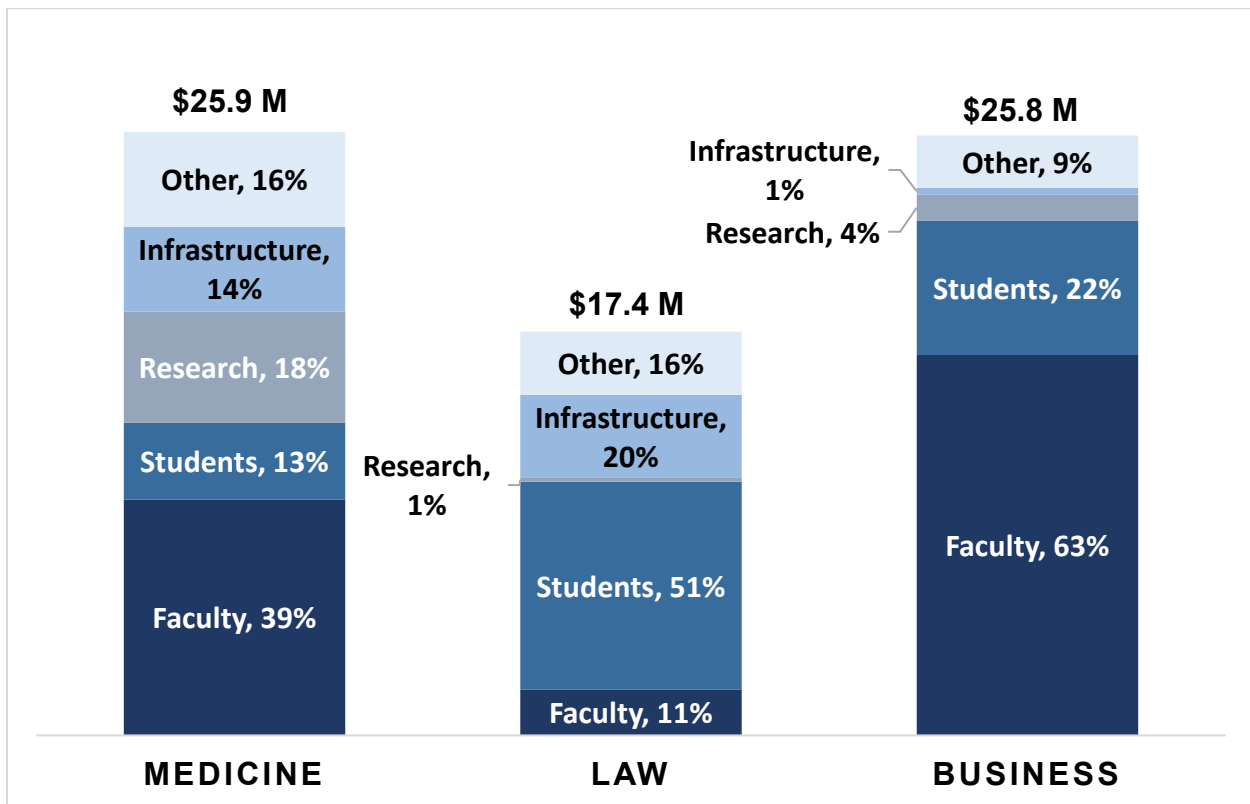


*Source:* Florida Board of Governors staff analysis of data provided by SUS institutions on the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program, fall 2019.

When examining the funds across the program areas of medicine, law, and business, the majority of the funds supported faculty and students. Exhibit 2 provides an overview of how the funds were spent in FY 2018-19.

- **Medicine:** Over the last year, SUS institutions spent more than \$25.9 million to support graduate education in medicine. A majority of the funds (52%) supported faculty or students and 16% supported other initiatives such as efforts to improve passage rates on licensure examinations, IT enhancements, and support staff.
- **Law:** SUS institutions spent approximately \$17.4 million on law schools. Almost two-thirds of these funds were spent on faculty and students, while remaining funds were devoted to student success initiatives to increase bar passage rates, expenditures to improve national rankings, and other enhancements to existing learning environments.
- **Business:** SUS institutions spent approximately \$25.8 million on graduate business education. Most of these funds (85%) were spent on faculty and students while remaining funds were spent on other graduate student initiatives, including enhanced advising and efforts to improve professional program national rankings through data analytics.

**Exhibit 2**  
**SUS Expenditures for Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence by Program Area**  
**2018-2019**



Source: Florida Board of Governors staff analysis of data provided by SUS institutions on the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program, fall 2019. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

## Elevating the National Competitiveness of the State University System

The intent of the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program is to enhance the quality and excellence of professional and graduate schools in the SUS. While it is still too early to see how this program has influenced metrics, baseline information, where available, is provided below.

### Exam passage rates

SUS medical school graduates do very well on the series of medical licensing examinations. As a system, most graduates meet or exceed national benchmarks on these exams.

**Exhibit 3****Summary of U.S. Medical Licensing Exam Performance for the SUS****U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE)-Step 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> year of medical school)**

| Year | FAU | FIU | FSU | UCF  | UF  | USF | SUS | Benchmark |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| 2016 | 97% | 99% | 97% | 100% | 96% | 94% | 97% | 96%       |
| 2017 | 97% | 99% | 93% | 97%  | 95% | 92% | 96% | 96%       |
| 2018 | 95% | 99% | 99% | 97%  | 96% | 98% | 97% | 96%       |

**U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE)-Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (4<sup>th</sup> year of medical school)**

| Year    | FAU  | FIU | FSU | UCF  | UF  | USF  | SUS | Benchmark |
|---------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----------|
| 2015-16 | 100% | 94% | 94% | 100% | 99% | 99%  | 98% | 96%       |
| 2016-17 | 100% | 97% | 98% | 98%  | 94% | 95%  | 97% | 96%       |
| 2017-18 | 98%  | 99% | 96% | 99%  | 99% | 100% | 99% | 97%       |

**U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE)-Step 2 Clinical Skills (4<sup>th</sup> year of medical school)**

| Year    | FAU  | FIU | FSU | UCF  | UF  | USF | SUS | Benchmark |
|---------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| 2015-16 | 100% | 98% | 99% | 100% | 99% | 97% | 97% | 97%       |
| 2016-17 | 97%  | 97% | 96% | 99%  | 97% | 96% | 97% | 96%       |
| 2017-18 | 96%  | 97% | 95% | 97%  | 96% | 97% | 97% | 95%       |

Source: State University System Accountability Plan, 2019.

SUS law school graduates also perform well on the Florida Bar exam. Four of the five law schools exceed the benchmark for all exam takers in Florida. Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University identified plans to use funds from the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program to improve graduate passage rates on the Florida Bar Exam in future years.

**Exhibit 4  
Passage Rates on the Florida Bar Exam**

| Year | FAMU | FIU | FSU | UF  | SUS | Benchmark |
|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| 2016 | 54%  | 87% | 78% | 78% | 76% | 66%       |
| 2017 | 50%  | 87% | 81% | 77% | 75% | 69%       |
| 2018 | 47%  | 88% | 83% | 69% | 72% | 66%       |

Source: State University System Accountability Plan, 2019.

**Employment Outcomes: Graduate-Level Business Degree**

Section 1004.6498, *Florida Statutes*, also requires the Board of Governors to report on employment outcomes for graduate-level business programs. Exhibit 5 provides an overview of the percentage of master's degree graduates earning more than \$40,000 in the year following graduation. This exhibit reflects 2017-18 graduates who were found employed in Florida. Compared to 2015-16 graduates, the most recent data reflects a system-wide increase of 1%, from 57% to 58%, of graduates working in Florida and earning more than \$40,000 per year. Due to the timing of workforce data collection, it may be a few years before salaries for graduates increase.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Employment Outcomes for Graduate-Level Business Degrees, 2017-18 Graduates**

| SUS Institution | 2017-18 Graduates* | Job Placement of Graduates Earning more than \$40K in Florida or enrolled** |            |
|-----------------|--------------------|---|------------|
|                 |                    | Number of Graduates   | %          |
| FAMU            | 58                 | 15  | 26%        |
| FAU             | 532                | 331   | 62%        |
| FGCU            | 53                 | 35  | 66%        |
| FIU             | 1,169              | 678   | 58%        |
| FSU             | 317                | 179   | 57%        |
| UCF             | 479                | 323   | 67%        |
| UF              | 878                | 422   | 48%        |
| UNF             | 155                | 104   | 67%        |
| USF             | 390                | 254   | 65%        |
| UWF             | 138                | 81  | 59%        |
| <b>System</b>   | <b>4,165</b>       | <b>2,422</b>  | <b>58%</b> |

\*Includes graduates with valid SSN.

\*\* Also includes continuing education. All continuing education outcomes are based on enrollment data for the fall 2018 semester and the preliminary winter/spring 2019 semester. The percent employed includes only those employed in Florida.

Source: FLDOE Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data, provided 12-2-2019. All employment outcomes contained in this table are based on the Florida U/I wage data from October - December quarter of 2018. Doctoral recipients were not included due to the qualitatively different nature of their education.

## National Rankings

In national rankings, the System continues to be recognized by U.S. News & World Report for excellence in higher education. For the third year in a row, the publication has recognized Florida as the best state for higher education. In fall 2019, U.S. News & World Report also ranked four SUS institutions in the top 100, with the University of Florida ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, up from 8<sup>th</sup> in the prior year, and Florida State University ranked 18<sup>th</sup>, up from 26<sup>th</sup> the prior year. In addition, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University is ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> best public historically black college and university.

Specific to medicine, law, and graduate business, SUS institutions also rank high in the U.S. News & World Report rankings for these areas. Exhibit 6 provides an overview of national rankings compared to all other private and public institutions. U.S. News &



World Report does rank specific individual programs within these areas, such as Global MBA. However, the rankings provided in Exhibit 6 are the only ones readily available to the public.

**Exhibit 6**

**U.S. News & World Report 2020 Rankings, Specific Graduate Programs**

| SUS Institution | Medicine (Research) | Law | Business |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----|----------|
| UF              | 43                  | 31  | 25       |
| FSU             | 93-120              | 48  | 79       |
| USF             | 52                  | N/A | 95       |
| UCF             | 88                  | N/A | Unranked |
| FIU             | Unranked            | 91  | Unranked |

Note: These rankings represent only those publicly available. Unranked indicates the program was listed as unranked. N/A indicates not applicable because the institution does not offer that program.

Source: U.S. News & World Report Rankings of Best Medical Schools, Best Law Schools, Best Business Schools, 2020.

**Economic Impact**

According to multiple economic impact studies, the State University System is an important contributor to Florida’s economy both directly and indirectly through spending for university operations, sales and services of component units, and other purposes. Additionally, the Board maintains a research dashboard that includes metrics calculating return on investment. As reported in February 2019, the system created or supported over 20,000 jobs in FY 2017-18 through external funding. Further, the calculated economic impact of state and federal research expenditures was over \$3.8 billion in FY 2017-18. These examples highlight how the State University System is a good return on investment.

**Conclusion**

While the full effects of the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program are not yet known, the Program has provided an opportunity for SUS institutions to support and enhance professional and graduate education in the state.

## APPENDIX A

In 2018-19, SUS institutions awarded 702 medical degrees, 774 law degrees, and 4,793 graduate-level business degrees. While degrees awarded in medicine and law have remained relatively stable, the total graduate degrees awarded in business has increased by 13% in the last three years. Tables 1-3 below provide additional detail of the degrees awarded by institution for the last three academic years.

**Table 1**  
**Total Graduate Degrees Awarded in Medicine (MD)**

| Institution     | 2016-2017  | 2017-2018  | 2018-2019  |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| FAU             | 62         | 64         | 55         |
| FIU             | 114        | 114        | 119        |
| FSU             | 116        | 109        | 114        |
| UCF             | 113        | 116        | 116        |
| UF              | 133        | 137        | 129        |
| USF             | 162        | 158        | 169        |
| <b>Total MD</b> | <b>700</b> | <b>698</b> | <b>702</b> |

Source: Florida Board of Governors, Office of Data Analytics, Degrees Awarded Data Mart, November 2019.

**Table 2**  
**Total Graduate Degrees Awarded in Law**

| Institution      | 2016-2017  | 2017-2018  | 2018-2019  |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| FAMU             | 106        | 127        | 130        |
| FIU              | 154        | 145        | 143        |
| FSU              | 213        | 197        | 170        |
| UF               | 323        | 324        | 331        |
| <b>Total Law</b> | <b>796</b> | <b>793</b> | <b>774</b> |

Source: Florida Board of Governors, Office of Data Analytics, Degrees Awarded Data Mart, November 2019.

**Table 3**  
**Total Graduate Degrees Awarded in Business**

| Institution  | 2016-2017    | 2017-2018    | 2018-2019    |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| FAMU         | 49           | 58           | 74           |
| FAU          | 469          | 559          | 568          |
| FGCU         | 60           | 53           | 67           |
| FIU          | 1,339        | 1,348        | 1,367        |
| FSU          | 277          | 322          | 345          |
| UCF          | 407          | 491          | 501          |
| UF           | 919          | 960          | 887          |
| UNF          | 137          | 177          | 223          |
| USF          | 493          | 562          | 600          |
| UWF          | 107          | 149          | 161          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>4,257</b> | <b>4,679</b> | <b>4,793</b> |

Source: Florida Board of Governors, Office of Data Analytics, Degrees Awarded Data Mart, November 2019.



# STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA





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