

No More Cuts for Higher Education

Talking Points for Legislator Contacts

1. The fastest way out of a recession, leaving Florida with a stronger workforce than when the recession began, is to increase funding for higher education. Of all categories of government expenditure, higher education has the greatest multiplier effect on the state economy. And, when people are unemployed, they need access to higher education so they can upgrade their credentials and skills and emerge ready for a better job. Without education, workers emerge from a recession less able to contribute to the workforce, pay taxes, and support themselves without reliance on social programs. **Supporting higher education during a recession makes a state's economy stronger. Cutting funds makes it weaker. The fastest and strongest way to leave a recession is to fund higher education.**
2. The student-faculty ratio is now the worst in the nation for universities -- worse than Louisiana after Katrina, which ranks 49th. Public colleges have 50,000 new students this year with no additional full-time faculty to teach them. More cuts mean faculty layoffs, fewer classes, and fewer qualified faculty to teach essential subjects. **Supporting higher education increases the quality of preparation and training for Florida's workforce.**
3. If students seeking to enroll are denied access in a recession, they join the ranks of the unemployed -- swelling joblessness. If students who are already enrolled cannot get the classes they need for graduation, they waste time and money as they seek their degrees. **Supporting higher education reduces the ranks of the unemployed and allows students to use their time constructively and efficiently during a recession.**
4. The quality of higher education is already in jeopardy. The staffing necessary to run programs is on the brink of collapse after a brain drain lasting several years. (The annual turnover rate in the universities is 14%.) This means the range of courses students need to complete a degree, with faculty qualified and ready to teach specialized courses, is in peril. **Supporting higher education allows universities and colleges to offer the specialized courses that students need to complete studies and receive the education they are expecting.**
5. For two decades funding for higher education has been shrinking as a portion of the state's budget. The result is that programs are stretched to the limits. Since September 2007, Florida's universities have suffered cuts of 11.4% (\$425 Million), and public colleges have been cut 12.8% (\$153 million) in program and lottery funds. Further cuts will force layoffs of faculty and a collapse of many programs. In other words, students who are enrolled at a Florida university and have made financial sacrifices for an education will have to defer their dreams. **Supporting higher education means retaining the faculty that students need to get their degrees.**
6. We can fund higher education (with no more cuts) by closing tax loopholes and eliminating tax giveaways. New revenue comes from everyone paying a fair share of taxes which are then invested in Florida's economy and in the future of students. If the 2009 Legislature cannot agree on how to pass this legislation, then it should pass a temporary sales tax increase until legislators can agree on tax reform. (This is the proposal of the Florida Education Association.) **Supporting higher education can be achieved through immediate tax reform or through a temporary sales tax increase followed by comprehensive tax reform.**

Contact Legislators Now

Leave a brief voice message at the district offices of legislators or send email messages with one or two sentences. It's the volume, not the length, of messages received by each legislator that counts. If you know about an example of damage from cuts on your campus, you can refer to it, but details are not necessary. State employees should be careful to use an off-campus computer and email address.

No More Cuts for Higher Education: Messages

1. The fastest and strongest way to leave a recession is to fund higher education.
2. Supporting higher education reduces the ranks of the unemployed and allows students to use their time constructively and efficiently during a recession.
3. Supporting higher education increases the quality of preparation and training for Florida's workforce.
4. Supporting higher education allows universities and colleges to offer the specialized courses students need to complete degrees.
5. Supporting higher education prevents faculty layoffs and the collapse of many academic programs for students.
6. Supporting higher education can be achieved through immediate tax reform or through a temporary sales tax increase followed by comprehensive tax reform.

Contact Information for Legislators

See: <http://www.uff-fsu.org/art/FloridaLegislators.xls>