

# Higher Education



*At the local and state levels, greater support for public institutions and a refusal to shift the funding burden to students in the form of tuition would be a tremendous help.*

**T**he state's financial support for public higher education has withered over the past decade as other demands compete for state funds. Because of this, our system of higher education is in jeopardy. The policies that made higher education great are being seriously eroded.

## ***FEA Recommends:***

Higher education is one of the most cost-effective expenditures Florida can make. Increased state funding of higher education institutions is necessary to keep up with demand. New funding models should be examined which address increasing costs and quality rather than the current model which consistently underfunds actual enrollment.

Quality of service to Florida's university and college students should be a system priority. Each institution of higher education should review their policy on the use of adjunct faculty to meet instructional needs and make those findings public. Fee waivers to graduate assistants who are granted tuition waivers and university employees would also help Florida be more competitive in attracting and retaining the best and brightest to our higher education institutions.

Increased access and affordability are crucial to our state's future. We support increasing needs-based financial aid to low and middle income students.

Policies must take into account student needs and aid in increasing persistence and degree completion. We must be prepared to address the fundamental causes of completion problems. Income is closely related to graduation rates.

Students must be better prepared for a rigorous college curriculum. Bringing curriculum specialists from the high schools together with curriculum specialists from higher education in the same discipline would strengthen high school coursework for college-bound students.

Our members vigorously oppose both state and federal bills that incorporate language of the so-called "academic bill of rights". Such measures create unnecessary and inappropriate government interference to our academic institutions and impose an ideological litmus test on hiring, curriculum, and teaching.