

FLORIDA LEADS



HIGHER EDUCATION REVIVAL

WITH INNOVATIVE TUITION OPPORTUNITY
FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

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KEY FINDINGS



FLORIDA IS A **NATIONAL LEADER** IN HIGH-QUALITY, LOW-COST HIGHER EDUCATION.



STATE LAWMAKERS RECENTLY PASSED AN INNOVATIVE POLICY CREATING **AN ONLINE, OUT-OF-STATE TUITION RATE AT SELECT COLLEGES** THAT ALLOWS FLORIDA'S HIGH-CALIBER EDUCATION TO REACH STUDENTS NATIONWIDE.



FLORIDA WILL BENEFIT AS IT **REINFORCES ITS HIGHER EDUCATION LEGACY.**

THE BOTTOM LINE:

FLORIDA'S INNOVATIVE ONLINE TUITION REFORM SOLIDIFIES THE SUNSHINE STATE AS A NATIONAL LEADER IN HIGHER EDUCATION. WITH THIS AFFORDABLE EDUCATION, FREE FROM POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION, STUDENTS WILL LOOK TO FLORIDA FOR EDUCATION AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.

Overview

Florida has done it again. In 2024, state lawmakers bucked the systematic norms by passing legislation to create a new tuition rate for out-of-state students at select colleges.¹

Specifically, three Florida Colleges—Miami Dade College, Polk State College, and Tallahassee Community College, which will become Tallahassee State College on July 1—may now charge a new, lower tuition rate, including distance learning fees, to non-resident, distance learning students.² The new rate of \$290 per credit hour, or roughly \$7,000 per year, would apply beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.³

With this new law, Florida reinforces its legacy as an innovative leader in higher education.

Florida is a national leader in high-quality, low-cost higher education

Florida leads the way in offering students a high-caliber education. State leaders accomplish this by consistently weeding out divisive and politically charged initiatives.

Deceptively named diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts have seen a sharp rise in recent years.⁴ Radical leftists are attempting to take over higher education. While many colleges and universities are bastions of political indoctrination, Florida institutions focus on educating.⁵

Last year, Florida prohibited institutions of higher education from spending taxpayer dollars on discriminatory initiatives like DEI.⁶ The state also prohibited programs and courses grounded in theories that systemic racism and oppression are inherent to our nation's institutions.⁷ Moreover, the state ended the use of political filters for admissions and hiring in the public university system.⁸

More recently, Florida's Board of Governors—the governing body for the state's university system—voted to prohibit state universities from using state or federal funds to support DEI programming.⁹ Florida's leadership in these efforts has even prompted the University of Florida to be referred to as "the Harvard of the Unwoke."¹⁰



**WHILE OTHER SCHOOLS INCENTIVIZE ANYTHING
BUT MERITOCRACY, COSTING TAXPAYERS
MILLIONS, FLORIDA IS FOCUSED ON EXCELLENCE.**

The DEI industry is valued at more than \$9 billion annually.¹¹ While other schools incentivize anything but meritocracy, costing taxpayers millions, Florida is focused on excellence.¹² Florida uses performance-based funding, which applies important metrics to measure success: percent of graduates employed, median wages of graduates, average cost to the student, graduation rates, etc.¹³ This is imperative as test scores nationally are at their lowest levels in decades.¹⁴ Unsurprisingly, Florida's higher education system has held the top spot nationwide for seven consecutive years.¹⁵


While DEI efforts at public institutions are costing taxpayers millions and likely helping to drive up tuition, Florida keeps tuition rates at the nation's lowest levels for its residents.¹⁶ Most students nationwide graduate with debt.¹⁷ Individuals spend their entire lives paying off student loans.¹⁸

But in Florida, in the 2020-2021 academic year, 75 percent of Florida's resident undergraduate students did not take out any loans.¹⁹ The Florida College System specifically holds tuition low.²⁰ Contrast this with nationwide tuition trends, where prices have risen.²¹ Florida students are also graduating at high rates, ranking second for completing two-year degree programs and fourth in the nation for four-year graduation rates.²²

That Florida is the state spearheading this innovative solution to bring affordable options to students nationwide should not be surprising. The new online out-of-state tuition reform originates in Florida's college system where graduates already took on less debt by graduation than the national average by nearly \$5,000.²³

Public tuition rates are set annually by the Florida legislature.²⁴ This is also true for the Florida College System, with additional local and institutional fees set by college-specific trustees and the Florida Board of Governors.²⁵ Because of state leadership and dedication, Florida boasts the lowest in-state tuition in the country.²⁶

While the Biden administration peddles free college shams, Florida's newest reform encourages excellence and self-sufficiency.²⁷



**IN THE 2020-2021
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State lawmakers passed an innovative policy creating an online, out-of-state tuition rate at select colleges that allows Florida's high-caliber education to reach students nationwide

Florida's colleges are a springboard for students, with 65 percent of the state's high school graduates choosing to begin their higher education at a Florida college.²⁸



HOUSED WITHIN THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM, THIS NEW OUT-OF-STATE ONLINE TUITION RATE IS POISED TO MEET A GROWING DEMAND FOR ONLINE COLLEGES.

With Florida’s new law, the state’s high-quality, low-cost education could reach even more students nationwide. Housed within the Florida College System, this new out-of-state online tuition rate is poised to meet a growing demand for online colleges.²⁹

Florida’s policy authorizes three select colleges to charge a new, out-of-state tuition rate, including distance learning fees, for online students.³⁰ This new rate is set at \$290 per credit hour or roughly \$7,000 per year for 24 credit hours.³¹

For low-income students who are Pell Grant eligible, the cost of online tuition would now be less than the maximum 2024-2025 Pell Grant award of \$7,395, ensuring a Florida degree comes at no cost to students and even allowing leftover funds for textbooks.³²

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The new online tuition rate for out-of-state students will apply to three Florida colleges: Miami Dade College, Polk State College, and Tallahassee Community College.³³ While the new tuition rate would provide cost savings to out-of-state students, it is still well above the tuition rate for Florida residents.

THEN AND NOW: ANNUAL AVERAGE OUT-OF-STATE TUITION

THEN: FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM AVERAGE OUT-OF-STATE TUITION	NOW: FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM OUT-OF-STATE ONLINE TUITION AT SELECT COLLEGES	MAXIMUM PELL GRANT
\$11,671	\$7,000	\$7,395

Source: Florida Department of Education, Florida Legislature, & U.S. Department of Education

OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS WILL SAVE MONEY PER CREDIT HOUR

COLLEGE	MIAMI DADE COLLEGE	POLK STATE COLLEGE	TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OUT-OF-STATE TUITION ASSOCIATE	\$331	\$409	\$387
OUT-OF-STATE TUITION BACHELOR'S	\$449	\$467	\$486
DISTANCE LEARNING FEES	\$15	\$0	\$10
NEW OUT-OF-STATE TUITION RATE	\$290	\$290	\$290

Source: Miami Dade College, Polk State College, Tallahassee Community College, & Florida Legislature

Students graduating from these Florida colleges have had starting salaries and rates of employment well above the national average.

GRADUATES FROM THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR EARNING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE



MIAMI DADE COLLEGE



The average full-time starting wage was \$66,264.³⁴



POLK STATE COLLEGE



The average full-time starting wage was \$57,506.³⁵



TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



The average full-time starting wage was \$75,719.³⁶

Nationally, 60 percent of graduates with a bachelor's degree found employment. The average starting wage was \$55,911.³⁷⁻³⁸

The three colleges offer a wide range of degree programs online.³⁹⁻⁴¹ Students nationwide will look to Florida for career and educational options.

FULLY ONLINE DEGREES OFFERED

Miami Dade College	Polk State College	Tallahassee Community College
<p>Bachelor of Science Nursing Information Systems Technology</p> <p>Bachelor of Applied Science Public Safety Management Supervision and Management Supply Chain Management</p> <p>Associate in Science Accounting Technology Business Administration Criminal Justice Technology Entrepreneurship</p> <p>Associate in Arts</p>	<p>Bachelor of Science Nursing Criminal Justice Aerospace Sciences</p> <p>Associate in Arts Liberal Arts</p> <p>Associate in Science Business Administration Criminal Justice Technology Aerospace Administration Aviation Maintenance Administration Network Systems Engineering Technology</p>	<p>Associate in Science Criminal Justice Technology Early Childhood Development Education and Management Paralegal and Legal Studies</p> <p>Associate in Arts</p>

Source: Miami Dade College, Polk State College, & Tallahassee Community College

Demand for online education is increasing. In the fall of 2021, more than 60 percent of undergraduate students enrolled in at least one online course, up from 36 percent in 2019.⁴² And in 2021, 28 percent of undergraduate students—or 4.4 million students—took courses exclusively online, up from 15 percent in 2019.⁴³

Florida is already home to one of the best online bachelor’s programs in the country.⁴⁴ The state’s policy will only bolster Florida’s ability to serve students nationwide.

Florida will benefit as it reinforces its higher education legacy

Miami Dade College, Polk State College, and Tallahassee State College will benefit as Florida’s policy may spark a broader, national conversation. Moreover, the new tuition rate could generate increased revenue for these first movers as students nationwide look to Florida for education and career options.

The reform further solidifies Florida as a leader and a disruptor. Confidence in higher education has plummeted.⁴⁵ Just eight years ago, 57 percent of Americans expressed a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in these institutions, compared to only 36 percent today.⁴⁶ It is time to break the cycle with affordable solutions, free from political indoctrination.



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Amid the onslaught from the radical Left, now more than ever the nation needs excellent and affordable education options. American students crave traditional education that fosters open dialogue and human flourishing. That is antithetical to the Marxist victim-oppressor model offered by the Left.

And while President Biden promises to inflate the cost of education with “free” money, and punish those who are responsible savers, Florida offers innovative solutions that promote self-sufficiency.⁴⁷

THE BOTTOM LINE: Florida’s innovative online tuition reform solidifies the Sunshine State as a national leader in higher education. With this affordable education, free from political indoctrination, students will look to Florida for education and career opportunities.

No state has gone further to ensure students receive an excellent education, free from radical leftist indoctrination. Amid the plague of leftist education policies, Florida’s innovative and refreshing online tuition rate could allow students nationwide to have access to excellent higher education at an affordable cost.

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