

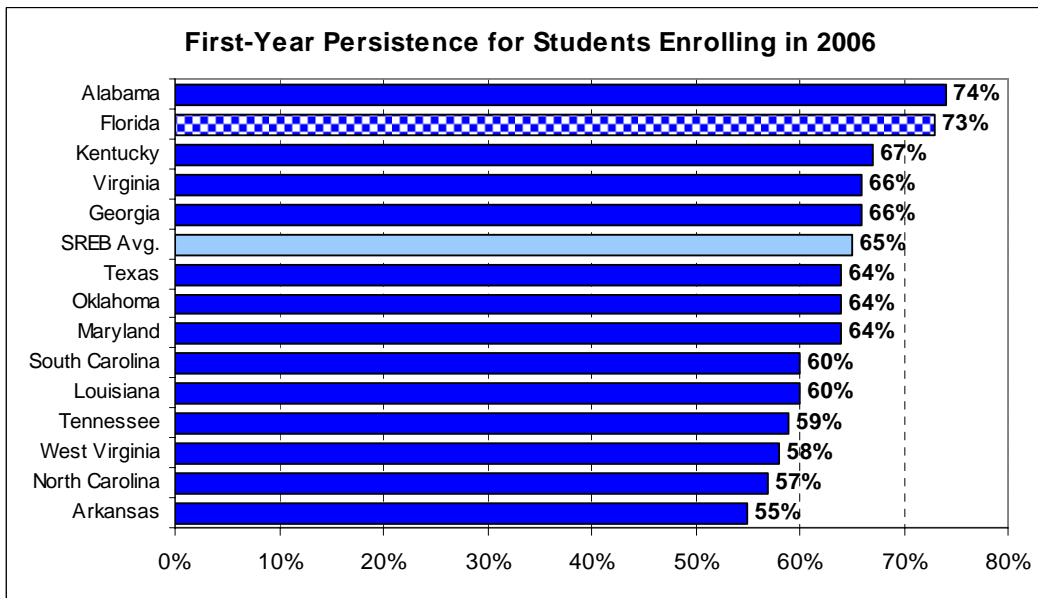
Florida Colleges Continue to Rank High Among Southern States

The Florida College System has traditionally ranked high in degree production among the 16 states covered by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Each year the SREB collects and publishes data on a wide variety of education topics for each state in the region. For higher education, the topics include degree productivity and persistence, headcounts, funding, faculty, and salaries. This report provides a summary of key results in each of those areas for The Florida College System.

Persistence

Students in Florida’s community colleges have very high persistence rates when compared to those in other SREB states. Persistence measures the percentage of students who return to a college after the first year or are still enrolled after a given period time. Florida ranks second in first-year persistence, meaning the percentage of students who return for their second year. Of Florida students who first enrolled in 2006, 73% returned the following year as compared to the SREB average of 65%. Only Alabama, at 74%, had a higher first-year persistence rate.

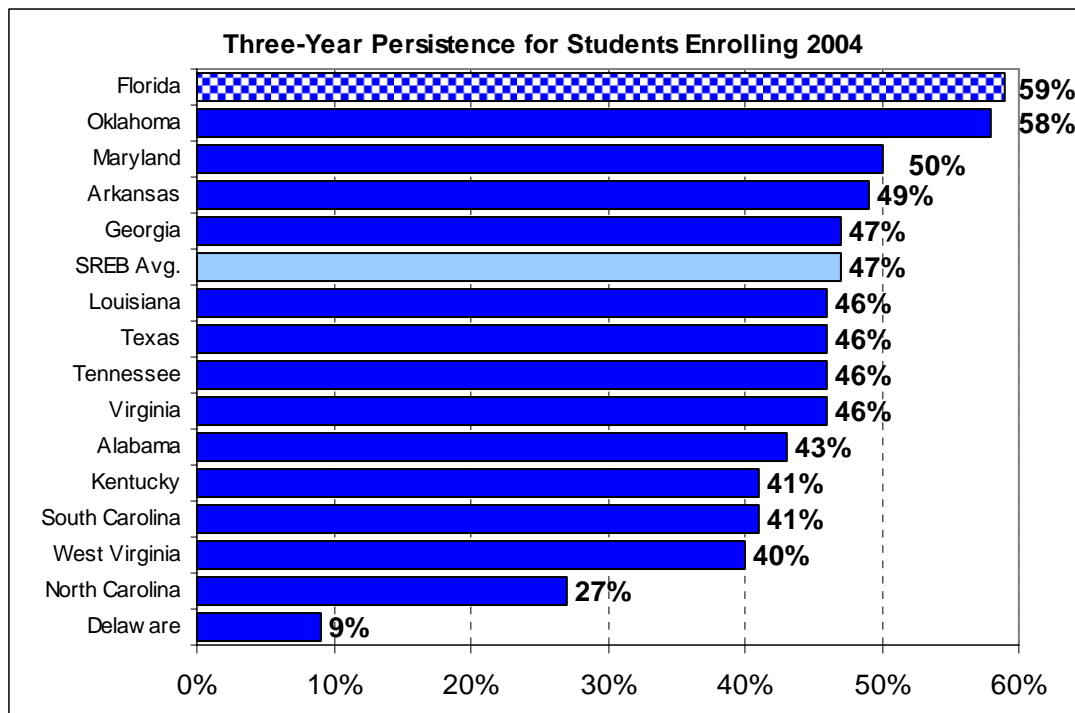
EXHIBIT 1: FLORIDA RANKS SECOND IN FIRST-YEAR PERSISTENCE RATES



SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.

Florida's three-year persistence rate (59%) leads among SREB states. Oklahoma was close behind at 58% and the SREB average was 47%. Most states have rates between 40% and 50%, making Florida and Oklahoma positive exceptions. A good three-year persistence rate is critical because it often takes part-time students more than two years to complete an associate degree or even a certification. Students who do not persist from year to year cannot complete the degree or certificate.

EXHIBIT 2: FLORIDA RANKS FIRST IN THREE-YEAR PERSISTENCE RATES



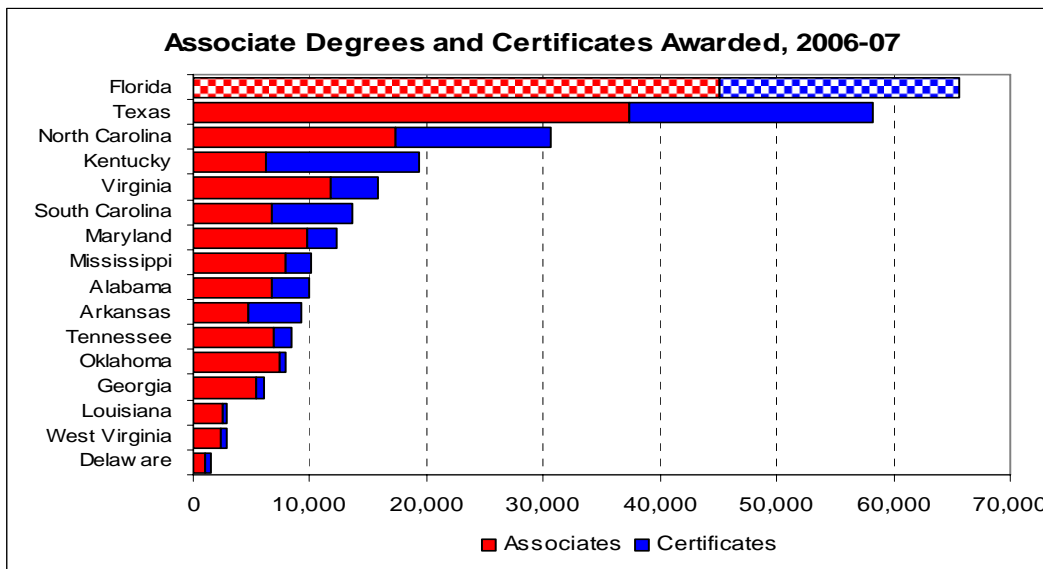
SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.

Degree Productivity

Florida consistently produces the largest number of degrees and certificates among the SREB states. Exhibit 3 shows that for 2006-07, the latest year for which data is available for all states, Florida produced over 45,000 associate degrees and 20,000 certificates. This represented 25% of all AA degrees awarded by the 16 SREB states and 21% of all certificates.

The large number of degrees and certificates produced is not simply a matter of size. Texas is a larger state than Florida but produces fewer overall associate degrees and certificates. Moreover, the data above show that Florida's colleges are very successful in helping retain students. The high persistence rates will directly contribute to increased degree production. As a result, the combination of both size and effectiveness drives Florida's high levels of productivity.

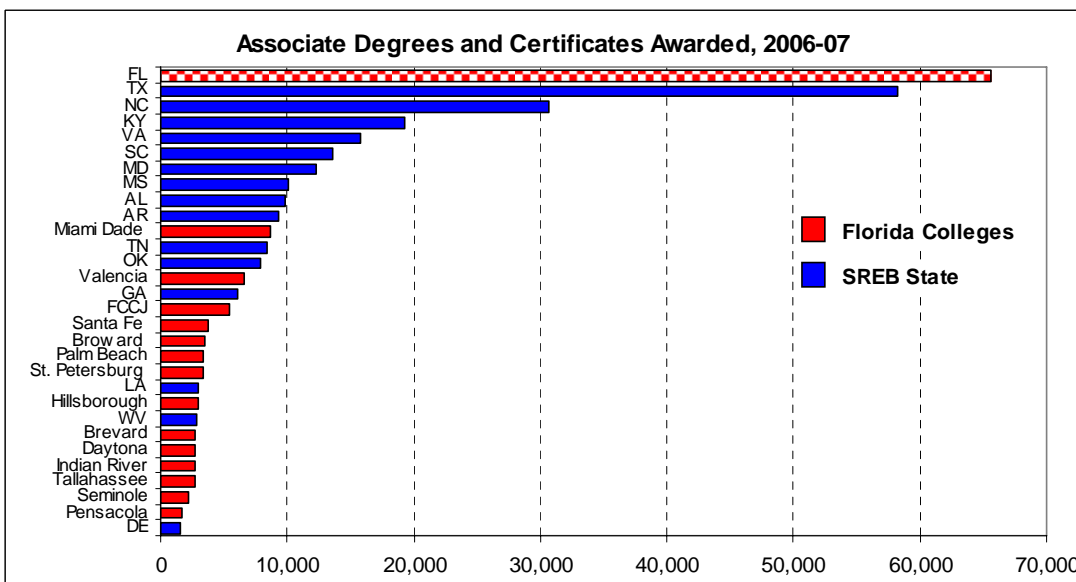
EXHIBIT 3: FLORIDA PRODUCES THE MOST DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AMONG SREB STATES



SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.

Fourteen Florida community colleges produce more degrees individually than at least one entire state. Six produce more degrees than Delaware, but fall behind the West Virginia which has the second smallest total in the SREB. Hillsborough Community College produces more degrees than both Delaware and West Virginia. Another five colleges also produce more associate degrees than Louisiana, West Virginia and Delaware. Valencia Community College and Miami Dade College are Florida’s two largest colleges. Both produce more associate degrees and certificates than the state of Georgia (along with the other three smaller states) and Miami Dade exceeds Tennessee and Oklahoma as well.

EXHIBIT 4: FOURTEEN FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGES PRODUCE MORE DEGREES THAN AT LEAST ONE SREB STATE



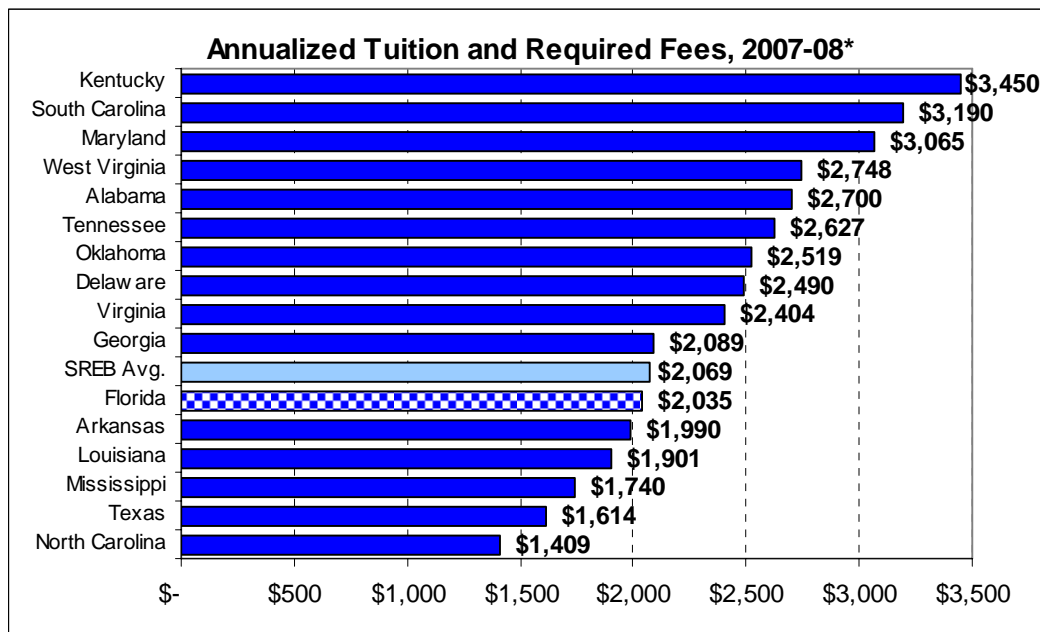
SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.

Tuition and Funding

Tuition for Florida’s community colleges ranks below the SREB average. Kentucky has the highest tuition while North Carolina has the lowest. The range is fairly large, with Kentucky charging more than twice what North Carolina does. Florida falls just below the SREB average, but is much closer in actual costs to the low end of the range.

Low tuition rates have advantages and disadvantages. It helps students, particularly those with low-incomes or who must pay their own way through college. It improves access for the very people who may be in most need of educational opportunities to improve their career opportunities. However, it also reduces the resources available to the college unless offset by higher state funding, grants, or external sources.

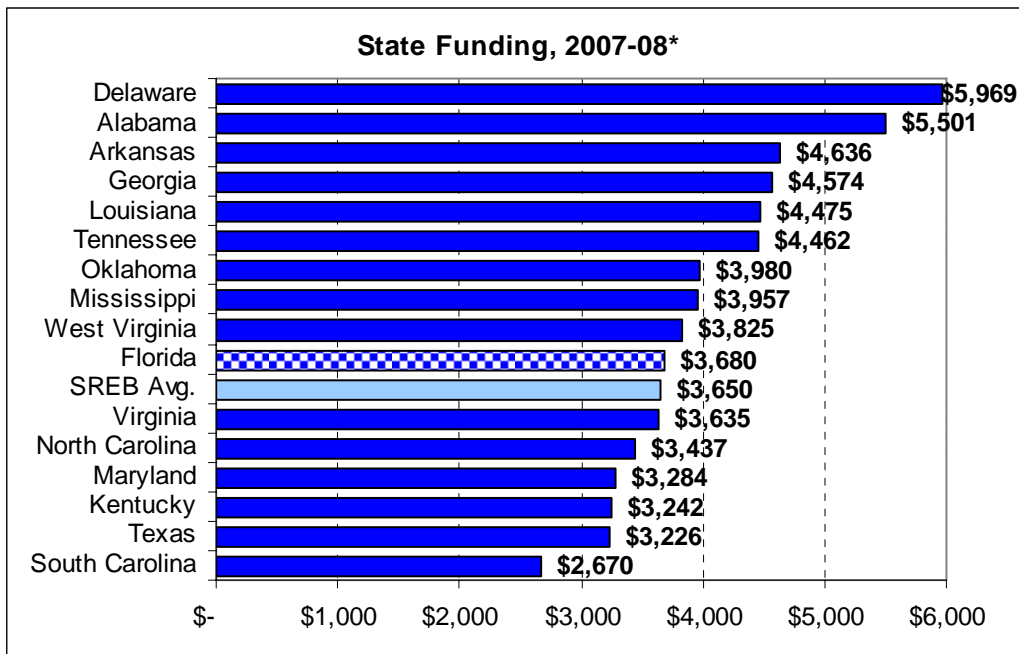
EXHIBIT 5: FLORIDA’S TUITION IS JUST BELOW THE SREB AVERAGE



SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.
 * TUITION COSTS PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT.

Exhibit 6 shows that state funding for Florida’s community colleges is slightly above the SREB average. Again, the SREB states show a considerable range with Delaware at the top, providing more than twice what North Carolina does. Florida, at \$2,035, is just above the SREB average and is about \$1,000 per full-time student more than South Carolina’s, but \$2,300 below Delaware’s and \$1,800 below Alabama’s.

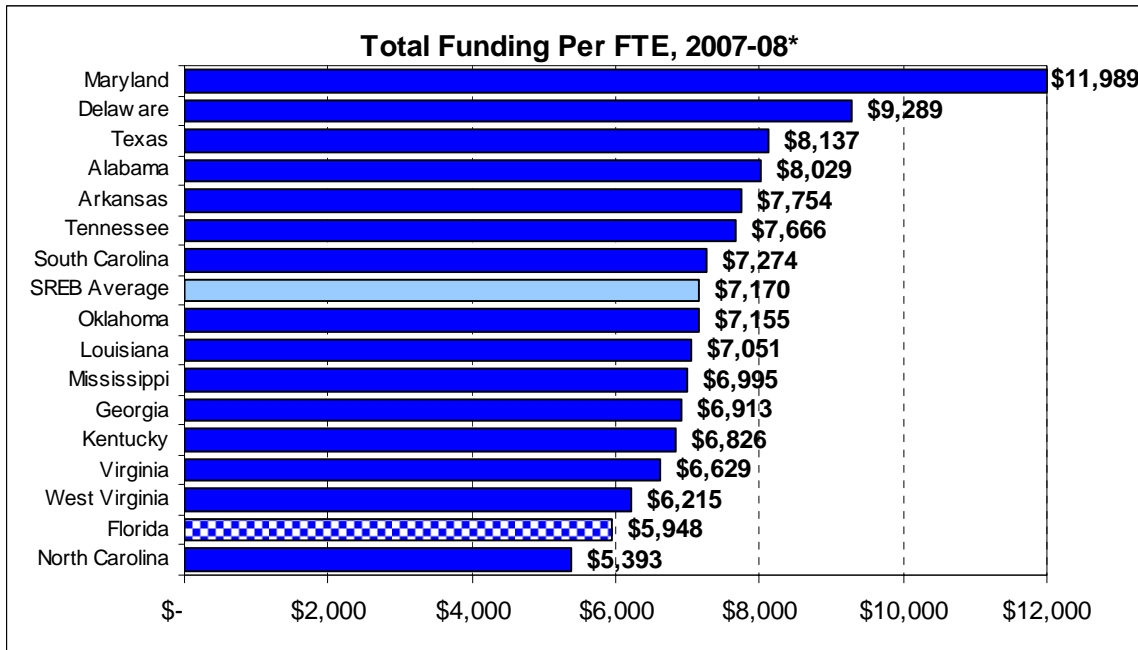
EXHIBIT 6: FLORIDA’S STATE FUNDING IS JUST ABOVE THE SREB AVERAGE



SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.
 * STATE FUNDING PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT.

As shown in Exhibit 7, Florida ranks second to last in total funding once all funding sources are included. Tuition and fees and state funding make up the bulk of funding for community colleges in most states. However, colleges often receive lottery funds, may have endowments, and in many states receive support from local property taxes (Florida is an exception). Combining all of these provides a picture of total funding per full-time student. At almost \$12,000 Maryland leads the SREB, and North Carolina and Florida trail at \$5,400 and \$6,000 respectively. Part of the differences between states can be attributed to differences in costs of living. In states where taxes and salaries are higher, the cost will naturally be higher and total funding will likely be higher as well.

EXHIBIT 7: FLORIDA’S TOTAL FUNDING IS SECOND TO LAST IN THE SREB



SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.

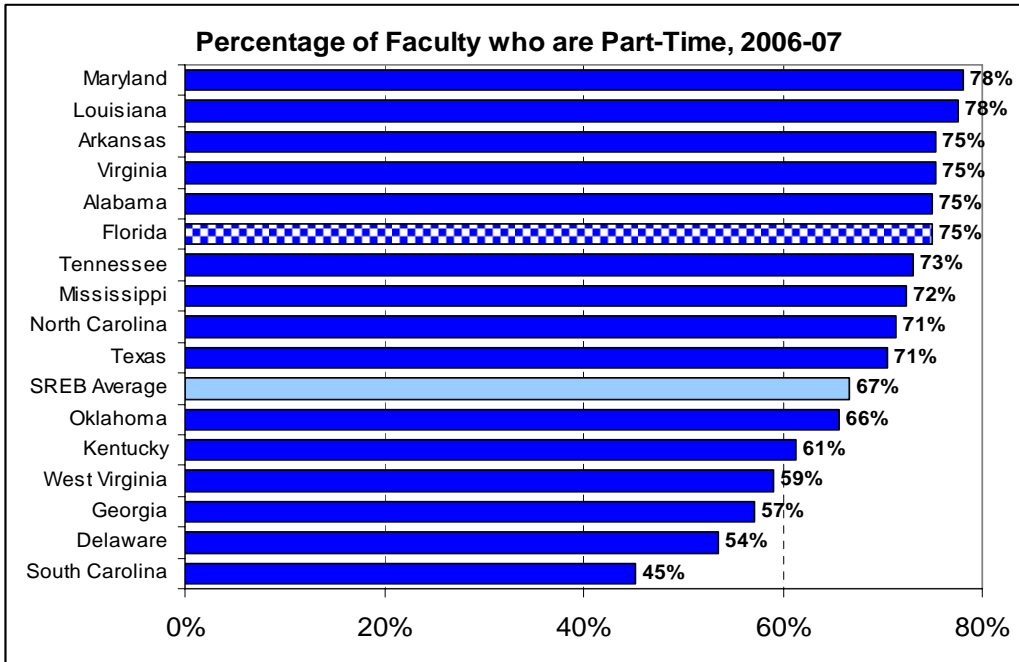
*FUNDS CONSIST OF (1) STATE AND (2) LOCAL TAX REVENUES ALLOCATED TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION-RELATED OPERATING EXPENSES, (3) OTHER FUNDS SUCH AS EARNINGS FROM STATE-FUNDED ENDOWMENTS USED FOR OPERATING PURPOSES, (4) EARMARKED REVENUES SUCH AS FROM LOTTERIES USED FOR OPERATING PURPOSES, AND (5) TUITION AND FEE REVENUE.

Faculty

Florida relies on part-time faculty somewhat more than most states. Part-time faculty, or adjuncts, account for a significant number of the faculty on community college campuses. This does help control costs and manage budgets since they are paid per course and typically do not receive benefits. Roughly three out of every four faculty in Florida’s community colleges are part-time. This exceeds the SREB average and places Florida even with several other states, and close to the top two at 78%.

It is important to note that adjuncts are not necessarily less effective than full-time faculty. Many bring valuable experiences to the classroom and allow the college to draw on a wider range of talented worker and leaders from within the community. However, because of their familiarity with the college, its programs, student-support services, and more, full-time faculty also provide value to the college. Balance between two needs is a local decision that is often influenced by the relative costs of hiring each type of faculty.

EXHIBIT 8: FLORIDA HAS A RELATIVELY HIGH PERCENTAGE OF PART-TIME FACULTY



SOURCE: DIVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ANALYSIS OF SREB DATA.

For more information please contact:

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