

NEWS TO KNOW



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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U.S. GAO Studies State Higher Education Funding Trends and Policies on Affordability

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) to study state policies affecting college affordability and to identify possible approaches where the U.S. Government could encourage states to make college more affordable. Rising costs of higher education and state budget constraints that limit funding for public colleges and universities are making college unaffordable for many students and their families.

The GAO examined how state financial support and tuition have changed at public colleges over the past decade. Using U.S. Department of Education (ED) data on public sector colleges, relevant academic studies, and interviews with subject matter experts, the GAO found that, from 2003 through 2012, state funding decreased by 12 percent overall while median tuition rose 55 percent across all public colleges. The GAO found that average net tuition, which is the estimated tuition after grant aid is deducted, increased by 19 percent during this period, contributing to the de-

cline in college affordability as students and their families have to bear more of the cost of college. In 2012, tuition surpassed state aid in percentage of total revenue for public colleges and universities.

While the [GAO report](#) makes no policy recommendations, its study does recognize the potential for improvement through the coordination of federal, state, and institutional actions to make college more affordable. For example, the federal and state governments could create new grants and provide more consumer information on college affordability and colleges and universities could ramp up efforts to encourage and assist students in graduating on time.

The report also discusses possible changes to the federal student aid programs that would, for example, tie a public college's eligibility to participate in federal student aid programs to certain state activities or the state's level of investment in higher education, or create incentives for students to complete their degrees on time.

OF INTEREST

From the National Council of Higher Education Resources, December 2014.

Clearinghouse Releases Fall Enrollment Data

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center released its [fall 2014 enrollment estimates](#), comparing college enrollment for the same period over the past three years. Data was parsed by sector, full- or part-time status, age, gender and by state. Overall enrollments decreased 1.3 percent from the previous fall, with enrollments among two-year public institutions down 6.0 percent; four-year for-profit institu-

tions down 0.4 percent; four-year public institutions up 2.2 percent; and four-year private non-profit institutions up 1.6 percent.

The report points out that part of the decrease in two-year public enrollments is due to institutions being reclassified in IPEDS as four-year institutions. Without these reclassifications, two-year public enrollments would have decreased by 3.4 percent and the growth in four-year public enrollments would have been 0.4 percent. Taken as a whole, public sector enrollments declined by 1.5 percent this fall.

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES AND TOOLS

The U.S. Department of Education [website](#) provides resources for financial aid/ financial aid professionals that includes:

- ◇ Application to Participate in Federal Student Aid Programs
- ◇ Direct Loan Consolidation School Services
- ◇ Common Origination and Disbursement (COD)
- ◇ E-Payments Grant Administration and Payment System
- ◇ National Student Loan Data System for Financial Aid Administrators
- ◇ Schools Portal
- ◇ Student Aid Internet Gateway Enrollment (SAIG)
- ◇ Student Aid Publications and How to Order

Visit the website for more resources, tools and information.

MAPPING YOUR FUTURE...for Financial Aid Professionals

The secure web portal for financial aid professionals provides services and tools tailored to an institution's specific needs. These services include: online entrance and exit counseling that meet all current regulatory requirements, data collection, access to verification worksheets, unbiased and personalized one-on-one counseling support, training opportunities, education materials, and more.

VISIT [Mapping Your Future](#) for more information on services.

COLLEGE

Florida Association of Post-secondary Schools and Colleges (FAPSC)

FAPSC's mission is to provide leadership, support and advocacy for quality career education.

FAPSC, the voice of career schools since 1956, currently works on behalf of all Florida's degree granting and non-degree granting career schools and colleges. The participating schools, licensed by the state of Florida, educate and prepare over 275,000 students yearly for employment in over 200 occupational fields. FAPSC is incorporated as a 501(C)(6) non-profit corporation and is guided by Florida state laws.

Their values:

- Access
- Accountability
- Choice
- Integrity
- Professionalism

FAPSC provides a unified voice for their members on Legislative and regulatory issues through

- Communication with the Commission for Independent Education.
- Initiation and support of legislation that promotes transferability, access and accountability.
- Grassroot political efforts, which encourage each school to host a Legislative visit using their "FAPSC Guide to Legislative Visits."

Visit the [FAPSC](#) website for more detailed information.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 2015-16 Reinstatement/Restoration Application opens for state scholarships.
 - ◊ Office of Student Financial Assistance recommends that students submit applications by July 1 for a timely fall disbursement or by December 15 for a timely spring disbursement.
- 2015 College Goal Sunday (CGS!**Florida**)
 - ◊ 56 site locations around the state, February 1 through February 28. Go to the CGS!**Florida** [website](#) for more detailed information.

State Programs Links

Be sure to visit the Office of Student Financial Assistance, Florida Student Scholarship & Grant Programs [website](#) and choose the [State Program Links](#) to review:

- The Annual Report to the Commissioner
- State Programs End-of-Year Reports
- Bright Futures Statistical Reports
- Florida State Financial Assistance Statutes
- State Board of Education Rules

OSFA'S OUTREACH TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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THE OSFA PHILOSOPHY



The Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) has the ability to offer its partners and customers something few public agencies can, the ability to shape OSFA programs and services based on their specific needs and concerns. OSFA provides financial aid workshops, publications, prompt services for participants, and helps fund scholarship and grant programs. If a participant has a problem or suggestion, the OSFA management team listens and makes every effort to implement a solution that meets their needs. Public dollars deserve the kind of accountability OSFA provides in financing education.

The News to Know is now available on the [Policy, Regulations, and Guidance](#) page of our website. Previous editions may be viewed on our [Archives](#) page.

Contact OSFA

Tallahassee, FL

Toll-free State Programs: **1-888-827-2004**

E-mail: OSFA@fldoe.org

Toll-free Federal Loans: **1-800-366-3475**

Locally: **1-850-410-5200**

[Click here](#) to contact an
**OSFA Outreach
Representative about your
institution's needs.**