



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Faculty Back Tuition Increases to Avert Collapse of Programs

The United Faculty of Florida applauds Governor Crist for recognizing the urgent need for a stable and predictable source of funding for Florida's public universities. This is a solid step towards restoring the health of the state's higher education system.

Both students and faculty across Florida have called out for higher tuition, not because it is desirable but because we know that without a stable source of funding, the state's universities will not be able to provide students sufficient access to the classes they need to graduate on time and they will not be able to support the research and innovation that Florida needs for economic development.

In this regard, Florida's faculty union stands with the Florida Student Association, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, and the Council of 100 in seeing our public universities and colleges as the engine of future growth in the state.

"We have lost too many faculty in the past few years," said United Faculty of Florida President Tom Auxter. "From history to robotics, our academic departments are hemorrhaging professors, and both students and Florida's economy are the ultimate victims."

The United Faculty of Florida also agrees that a substantial proportion of new revenues be devoted to need-based financial aid.

"Across the U.S., Florida has one of the worst proportions of aid going to students who struggle to pay for college," Auxter added. "If the governor's plan is approved, that situation will dramatically improve within a few years."

"In other states such as North Carolina, the Legislature and university board have a compact through which the Legislature can "buy down" tuition when they raise public funding for universities. The United Faculty of Florida thinks that with Governor Crist's proposal, such a long-term compact is within our reach."

"Finally, the distribution of funds that are generated for faculty salaries should be negotiated by the board of trustees and faculty union on each campus so that amounts appropriate for each university are determined according to the most urgent local needs for retention, salary compression, equity, merit, and discretionary. In this way there will be accountability for the distribution of funds locally rather than distribution according to a one-size-fits-all formula for the state."