



FLORIDA OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARS



Annual Report 2007-2008

Division of Student Affairs
Educating Leaders for a Global Community

**2007-08 Florida Opportunity Scholars Program
Facts at a Glance**

Number of Florida Opportunity Scholars:	770
2006 Freshmen Cohort	398
2007 Freshmen Cohort	372
Recipients by Race:	
Black:	42.7%
Hispanic:	23.9%
Asian:	10.4%
Native American:	0%
White	20.4%
Not Reported/Other:	2.6%
Recipients by Gender:	
Female:	68.7%
Male:	31.3%
Total Dollars Paid	\$3,641,025
Average award:	\$4,729
Average Family Income:	\$24,629
2007 Freshmen Admissions Yield Rate	81.0%
Enrollment Retention Rate (2006 Cohort)	92.6%
Enrollment Retention Rate (2007 Cohort)	95.4%
Scholarship Retention Rate (2006 Cohort)	81.8%
Scholarship Retention Rate (2007 Cohort)	89.6%
Average UF Cumulative GPA (2006 Cohort):	3.03
Average Credit Hrs Earned 2007-08 (2006 Cohort):	25
Average UF Cumulative GPA (2007 Cohort):	3.11
Average Credit Hrs Earned 2007 Cohort (2007 Cohort):	26

Florida Opportunity Scholars 2007-08 Annual Report

An Assessment of Second Year Implementation Strategies

Program History

The University of Florida is committed to diversity and access to higher education and actively supports initiatives that enable qualified students from all socio-economic backgrounds to attend UF. However, over time, the average family income of UF undergraduates has continued to rise and the number of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds has fallen. In 2006, the median freshman family income was \$100,000 while only 20% came from families earning less than \$50,000.

National studies have shown that students from low socio-economic backgrounds can be deterred from enrolling in a four-year college or university because of fear of debt and concerns that working while in school could hamper the chances of academic success. Many of these students opt instead to enroll in community colleges or choose not to attend college at all.

To help address this problem, in Fall 2005, President Bernie Machen asked Vice President of Student Affairs Patricia Telles-Irvin to design a new financial aid access program for first-generation college students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Several options and a cost analysis for each were proposed to meet the president's goals.

President Machen approved a proposal to provide full grant/scholarship financial aid packages to first-generation-in-college freshmen Florida resident students from families who made less than \$40,000 per year. The program, which was endorsed by the UF Board of Trustees, was named the Florida Opportunity Scholars Program (FOS) and was available to first-time-in-college students enrolling Summer 2006 or later. The program provides recipients a full grant and scholarship package each year for enrollment in a baccalaureate degree program. \$2 million in grant assistance was committed for the 2006-07 inaugural year and support was increased to over \$3.6 million dollars for 2007-08, funding both returning students and a new first-year class.

President Machen worked with then-Florida Governor Jeb Bush and the Florida Legislature to create a matching grant program for financial aid initiatives that assist economically disadvantaged first-generation-in-college students at all Florida's state universities. The First Generation Matching Grant Program was established to provide up to a 1:1 match for donor contributions (subject to appropriation) to Florida first-generation-in-college financial aid programs at Florida public universities and community colleges. In 2007-08, the state-wide appropriation for the state universities was \$6,304,925, of which the University of Florida received \$1,628,973, 26% of the total funds available.

The Process

For 2007-08, the Office for Student Financial Affairs offered Florida Opportunity Scholarships to new eligible freshmen admitted for the Summer B or Fall 2007 terms, as well as all eligible returning students who received the scholarship in 2006-07. The amount of each award is determined by the student's cost of attendance and expected family contribution (EFC), based on income information provided by the student on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The EFC is based on the Federal Methodology used for all federal and state need-based financial aid programs.

Each financial aid package is comprised of federal, state, institutional, and private grants and scholarships normally available to the student. Any remaining financial need (defined as cost of attendance minus expected family contribution and other grants and scholarships) is met with the Florida Opportunity Scholarship.

The Office for Student Financial Affairs packaging policy for needy students generally provides 60% of the cost of attendance through family contribution, grants and scholarships. The remaining 40% of a student's cost is met through educational loans and/or part-time employment. However, for Florida Opportunity Scholars recipients, the FOS scholarship substituted for the loan/work component of the package and students received a financial aid package consisting 100% of grants and scholarships.

Commitments are made to each recipient that the scholarship will be renewed each year for up to five years of undergraduate coursework, provided the student enrolls full-time each term, reapplies for aid annually, continues to meet income requirements, and earns at least 24 credit hours each year with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater. Students offered the scholarship are required to certify that they meet program eligibility requirements and understand the terms and conditions of the award (Appendix B). Beginning in 2007-08, first-time recipients are also required to actively participate in the FOS peer mentorship program and attend two one-hour seminars in their first and second years that are specifically designed for the program. First-year seminars focus on financial literacy and the second-year programs, to be implemented in 2008-09, will focus on career planning and resources.

Award offers were made to all newly qualifying students who applied for financial aid by March 15, 2007. At that point, sufficient awards had been offered to fully utilize the funds available to the program. For 2007-08, the program funded 770 students. 372 new freshmen students accepted their awards and enrolled at UF and 398 students from the 2006-07 inaugural class of 444 students re-enrolled and continue to qualify for the scholarship. The demographic profile of these recipients follows.

Recipient Profile

Total Florida Opportunity Scholars: 770

2006-07 cohort: 398

2007-08 cohort: 372

Gender

Female:	529	68.7%
Male:	241	31.3%

Race

African Am:	329	42.7%
Hispanic:	184	23.9%
Asian Am:	80	10.4%
White:	157	20.4%
Other/Unk:	20	2.6%

Average Family Income: \$24,629

Average FOS Award: \$4,729

Total FOS Awarded: \$3,641,025

2007 Cohort

Enrollment Date

Summer 07:	179	48.1%
Fall 07:	188	50.5%
Spring 08:	5	1.4%

2007 Cohort High School Grades/Test Scores

Average H.S. GPA:	3.8
Average SAT Score:	1087

Recipients represented 43 Florida counties and enrolled in 75 different majors, not including exploratory or undeclared majors. (Appendix D).

Support Services

First-generation students have unique needs and face challenges that may be unknown to families in which at least one parent has a college degree. These challenges may include, but are not limited to: financial barriers, the need for additional academic preparedness, a lack of awareness of available resources or support, and a family history that may not support or understand higher education.

A coordinating committee comprised of faculty and staff in the Division of Student Affairs and the AIM program was created to develop support strategies and resources and guide program implementation (Appendix A) and help ensure these students' academic and social success at the University.

The FOS coordinating committee developed a number of strategies and programs that support the students' academic success, engagement, and social interaction while promoting a sense of belonging to the university community. These strategies include:

- A beginning of term reception for freshmen scholars with the University president, trustees, faculty and staff. The purpose of this reception is to welcome

them to the University of Florida and at the same time while fostering a sense of community and pride in being a Florida Opportunity Scholar.

- Participation in FOS Orientation, a two-hour long orientation at the beginning of the Summer and Fall terms that reviews the FOS program requirements such as: specific renewal requirements, the peer mentoring program, First-Year Florida, and financial literacy seminar series.
- Priority for residence hall living accommodations. Students who reside on-campus during their first year have access to support and programs generally not available to off-campus students and so assimilate better into the university environment. While available residence hall spaces are not sufficient to accommodate all freshmen, FOS recipients who submit a timely housing contract are included as a priority group for accommodations.
- Financial literacy seminar series. Financial literacy workshops are offered during the Fall and Spring terms to help student manage their money, understand ways to prevent identity theft and manage credit card debt, develop budgeting strategies and provide assistance in reapplying for financial aid.
- Participation in SLS 1102 "Enhancing the Freshman Year Experience," also known as "First Year Florida." a semester-long one-credit course that exposes first-year students to university resources, opportunities and support services.
- Peer Mentor Program. Student mentors are paired with a small group of scholars to help these students feel a sense of community, have another student to talk with and share concerns or questions, and engage in social interaction. They also help identify students who may need additional support, resources or interventions to enhance their academic success The peer mentors attended a one-day training retreat at Lake Wauburg in April 2007.
- Empowerment groups for first-generation college students. The University Counseling Center initiated a supportive group experience involving Florida Opportunity Scholars and other first-generation students. Participants meet together in facilitated discussion to share issues, concerns, questions, accomplishments, and success strategies.
- In-person interventions for students do not do well on tests and mid-terms in certain math and chemistry courses as well as students whose fall grades and hours put them at risk for non-renewal. These students are called in to discuss their situations and to help determine underlying causes for their academic situations. Appropriate resources are then recommended to these students. Resources include: referral to the university counseling center; reminders about group support sessions and academic confidence groups; and reminders about the services offered by the Broward Teaching Center. Students may also be referred, as appropriate, to departmental tutors and study groups, disability services, academic advising, or the Dean of Students Office for additional guidance and discussion about academic and non-academic issues.

- Group social activities. In 2007-08, all FOS students had the opportunity to attend a dinner and women's basketball game and the annual step show competition.
- A year-end celebration for all scholars and mentors. The 2008 celebration was an after-hours event at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art. In addition to celebrating the scholars' successes, this gave many students the first opportunity to visit the museum and explore the Cultural Plaza that also houses the Florida Natural History Museum and the Phillips Performing Arts Center.
- Study abroad. All FOS students who entered in 2006-07 or 2007-08 are eligible to receive full grant funding up to \$10,000 over the normal cost of attendance for one study abroad experience during their undergraduate career. UF is committed to ensuring that its graduates attain global awareness and competencies and function successfully in an increasingly international workplace and economy. Study abroad experiences are one key component to increasing this global awareness and understanding.
- Family Newsletter, Phone-A-Thon, and Family Weekend Reception. Outreach to FOS families is important in helping to connect family members to the university. A family newsletter is sent in Fall and Spring to all parents. The newsletter includes information about support services available to students, suggestions about how parents could help their students adjust, and upcoming deadlines and reminders. FOS committee members and some peer mentors also participated in a phone-a-thon in November 2007 to FOS families to talk to parents to see how their students were doing and answer any questions they had about UF or FOS. A reception was also held during Family Weekend in October 2007 for FOS students and parents. This provided an opportunity for parents and students to meet members of the committee and chat informally, ask questions, or provide suggestions.

Program Funding

For 2007-08, the UF Foundation received \$2,438,026 in donations from 538 donors. The Florida legislature appropriated \$6.3 million state-wide for the First Generation Matching Grant Program. The University of Florida's initial state matching allocation was \$1,069,394, subsequently reduced to \$1,037,301 due to state budget cuts. The allocation was later increased to \$1,703,528 after redistribution in December 2007 of unused allocations from the other state universities. Even though the university qualified for additional matching, the state allocation was insufficient to match all donor contributions. Donor funds that could not be matched by the state are eligible for matching in 2008-09.

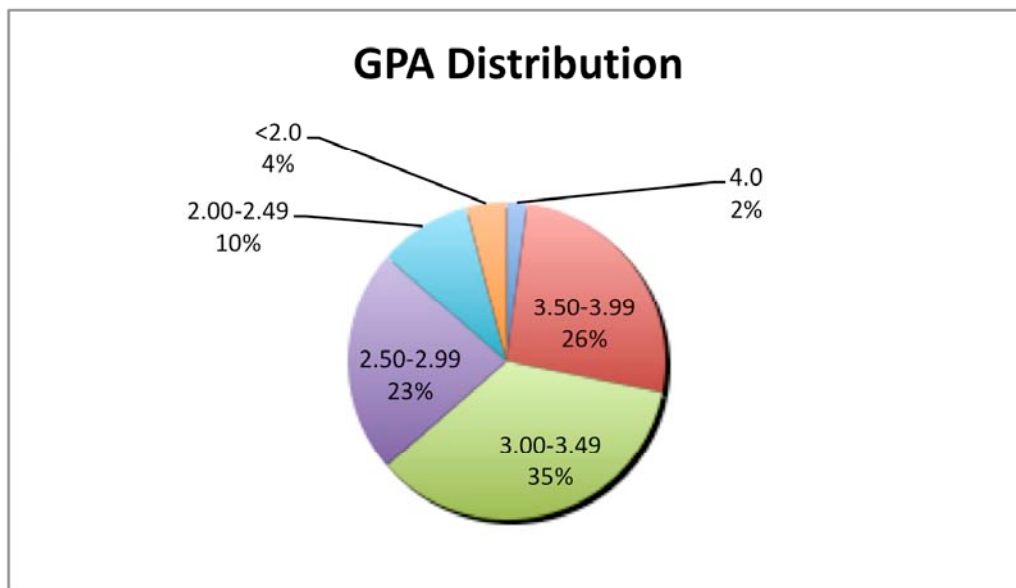
Assessments

Academics

Florida Opportunity Scholars recipients are required to earn at least 24 credit hours with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better to renew for the following year. Grades and hours were checked each term. At the end of the Fall 2007 term, students who appeared to be in danger of non-renewal were called in to speak with members of the FOS committee. Students were reminded of the renewal requirements and of support services to help keep them on track.

For students entering for the first-time in Summer B 2007 only, courses taken that term are also included in determining whether a student earned the required 24 credits.

At the end of Spring 2008, 599 students (77.8%) made sufficient academic progress for renewal on the Florida Opportunity Scholars. 84.9% of the 2007-08 cohort met the requirements and 70.9% of the 06-07 cohort did so. 63.5% of all the students had a 3.0 or better grade point average and 95.8% of the students earned a cumulative 2.0 GPA or greater as indicated in the chart below. 171 students (22.32%) failed to earn either the 2.0 cumulative GPA or 24 credit hours.



Students who did not meet academic renewal requirements could petition for renewal if the failure to make academic progress was due to extenuating circumstances or they could make up the deficits by enrolling in summer 2008 term at UF or another Florida public university or community college. Enrollment would not be funded through the Florida Opportunity Scholars Program, but students enrolling at UF could qualify for any aid generally available to all students. In most cases, this consists of loan and/or work. Students enrolled as transients at other colleges and universities are generally not eligible for aid.

By the end of the summer 2008 semester, an additional 107 students regained their academic eligibility by making up grades and hours during the summer term or petitioning due to extenuating circumstances.

- 77 Earned sufficient grades and hours during summer 2008 at UF
- 14 Earned sufficient grades and hours during summer 2008 at another institution
- 16 Successfully petitioned due to extenuating circumstances

Retention Rates

Enrollment Retention – 2006 Cohort

There are now two years of enrollment retention data for the 2006-07 cohort of students. Of the original 444 recipients who began that year, 92.6% (411 students) re-enrolled for 2008-09. 33 students (7.4%) are no longer enrolled. This exceeds the university-wide average of 91% for first year to third year enrollment retention for the 2006 class.

Enrollment Retention – 2007 Cohort

355 of the 372 first-year scholars returned for the Fall 2008 term, a 95.4% retention rate and 17 students (4.6%) did not re-enroll. This is consistent with the university's overall first-year to second-year retention rate of 95%.

Scholarship Retention – 2006 Cohort

The 2006 cohort scholarship renewal rate is 81.8%. 363 of 444 students met renewal requirements or successfully petitioned and were awarded the scholarship for 2008-09. 50 students continue their enrollment UF even though they were not eligible to renew their scholarships. The status of all recipients is as follows:

- 363 Met renewal requirements and were reawarded for 08-09
- 27 Did not meet family income renewal requirements
- 49 Did not meet academic renewal requirements
- 5 Did not to re-enroll but were otherwise eligible to continue

Scholarship Retention – 2007 Cohort

The scholarship renewal rate is for the 2007 cohort is 89.8%. 335 of the 372 students met renewal requirements and were awarded the scholarship for 08-09. 20 students re-enrolled at UF even though they were not eligible to renew their scholarships. The status of all 2007-08 recipients from this cohort is as follows:

- 335 Met renewal requirements and were reawarded for 08-09
- 9 Did not meet family income renewal requirements
- 22 Did not meet academic renewal requirements
- 1 Did not re-enroll but was eligible to continue
- 5 Did not participate in required peer mentor or financial literacy workshops

Support Assessment

Academic Intervention

In cooperation with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, FOS students who did not score well on the first test in the math and chemistry introductory sequence of courses were called in to speak with one of the committee members about their academic progress. The interventions were designed to gauge the student's adjustment to UF, offer support and refer the student to appropriate support services such as the Broward Teaching Center, University Counseling Center, Career Resource Center and Academic Advising. In 07-08 the coordinating committee offered 166 interventions. 82 students were identified in the fall and 84 in the spring. Some of these students were asked to come in both terms if they continued to demonstrate academic difficulty in math or chemistry.

At the end of the Fall 07 semester, the 82 students identified for interventions had an average semester GPA of 2.80, an average overall GPA of 2.88, and completed an average of 11.6 credit for the term indicating that most ended the term successfully and were on track for renewal.

At the end of Spring 2008, grades and hours for students who did not meet renewal requirements were compared for intervention and non-intervention students. As indicated below, grade point averages were comparable between both groups but non-intervention students had more credit hour deficits to make up than students who participated in the interventions.

	G.P.A.	Hours Needed
Non Intervention 06-07	2.61	6.3
Intervention 06-07	2.55	5.8
Non Intervention 07-08	2.14	9.7
Intervention	2.16	7.9

Student Surveys

In an effort to gather data about Florida Opportunity Scholars' experiences at UF, the coordinating committee distributed surveys in the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008 to the 07-08 first-year FOS students. The survey (Appendix E) asked questions about three areas—academic success, financial literacy, and campus resources providing support for FOS students.

The first survey, posted online for two weeks in late September 2007, had 190 respondents. It was designed to gauge incoming students' initial knowledge about the areas identified above. A follow-up "post-services survey" was available online for one week in April 2008 and 194 students responded for a 43% response rate. This survey was designed to ascertain whether student knowledge and awareness of services, financial

literacy and academic success strategies had improved over the course of the year. The second survey included all of the questions from the fall survey along with additional questions related to academic success that the committee believed would be helpful in assessing areas for future support.

In the Spring 2008 survey, 83.3% of FOS students agreed or strongly agreed that they have a support system available to them at the University of Florida. When asked to identify their sources of support, high percentages of FOS students identified FOS mentors (52% Fall, 43% Spring) and academic advisors (42% Fall, 47% Spring) as members of their support systems.

One of the most encouraging results was a 21% increase in the number of students reporting an understanding of financial management. We believe this improvement can be attributed to the financial management workshops that Student Financial Affairs provided all first-year FOS students in both the fall and spring.

The survey also found that FOS students are confident in their ability to succeed at UF. Even those students with whom the committee held academic interventions in the Fall 2007 semester were confident in their ability to succeed academically at the University of Florida, although the percentage of students from this group who agreed or strongly agreed (78%) with the statement, "I am confident in my ability to succeed academically at UF," was lower than the general FOS population (91%) responding to the survey.

Just over one-quarter of the survey respondents with whom academic interventions were held reported poor or very poor study habits, while only about one in ten of the non-intervention students reported poor or very poor study habits. This suggests that study habits need to be a subject of conversation during academic interventions.

The FOS coordinating committee will continue to update and distribute the pre-post test annually in order to acquire longitudinal data that can be used to further inform the work of the committee.

Division of Residence Life and Education

For the incoming Fall 2007 class, the Department of Housing and Residence Education offered housing contracts to 379 FOS students. Of these 379 students 264 chose to live in one of the residence halls for all or part of the 2007-08 academic year.

Financial Literacy Workshops

Beginning in 2007-08, attendance of two one-hour financial literacy workshops was required of all first-time FOS students. Twenty-seven workshops were held in Fall 2007 and twenty-eight workshops were held in Spring 2008. The fall seminar focused on good credit management and protection from identity theft. Spring workshops highlighted the financial aid application process, deadlines, and income tax reporting requirements. 354 students completed the required seminars. Three students were otherwise eligible for Florida Opportunity Scholarship but were not renewed for 2008-09 because they failed to meet this requirement.

Peer Mentor Program

First-year scholars were required to actively participate with their peer mentor. “Active participation” was defined as frequent contact with their mentor. Fifty-seven undergraduate students were selected as peer mentors, and each mentor was assigned an average of six FOS mentees. Learning outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship were developed. Those outcomes include:

- 1) Feel more comfortable navigating the university system
 - a. Understand the resources at his/her disposal
 - b. Become familiar with academic expectations
 - c. Understand the advising and tutoring structures
- 2) Develop effective study habits
- 3) Grasp the importance of campus involvement and giving back to his/her community
- 4) Feel connected to at least one upper-division student at UF
- 5) Begin to explore their personal values through a process of reflection and self discovery.

As of March 2008, 19 scholars had not been actively participating in the mentoring program, however, by the conclusion of Spring 2008, only nine scholars did not actively participate in the mentoring program. All were contacted and notified that their scholarship would not be renewed. Four of these students appealed and each was given a project to complete and required to attend an Ethical Decision Making seminar. All four students completed these requirements and were reinstated for 08-09. The remaining five students were not reinstated.

First-Year Florida

All first year scholars are required to enroll in SLS 1102, Enhancing the Freshman Experience, also known as “First-Year Florida.” At the end of Fall Semester 2007, forty-nine scholars had not completed the requirement and by the end of Spring Semester 2008, only one scholar had not completed this requirement. Five sections of First Year Florida were FOS-only sections (1 in Summer B, 3 in Fall, 1 in Spring). These sections were specifically designed to help in the FOS student transition to college. Each section was team-taught by a faculty/staff instructor and an undergraduate peer instructor, some of whom also acted as peer mentors.

Study Abroad

From Summer 2006 through Summer 2008, 74 first and second year FOS students participated in study abroad experiences, most through funding provided by the Florida Opportunity Scholars program. Students visited 20 countries around the world. While the most popular programs remain Western Europe, (Spain, Italy and France in particular), students studied abroad on every continent except Antarctica.

FOS Activities

Several social events were planned for the scholars throughout the year. Attendance was voluntary.

Estimated attendance (scholars and mentors):

Presidential Reception:	350+
Basketball Dinner and Game:	116
Gator Growl:	25
Step Show:	95
Year End Reception:	40

Parent Phone-a-thon

On November 14, committee members and student volunteers conducted a phone-a-thon to contact parents of FOS students to find out how parents thought their students were doing, if they found the family newsletter helpful, and to answer any questions parents might have about the program or UF. We were able to talk directly to about 1/3 of the families we called. Several parents for whom we left messages called us back. In general, we found that most parents believed their children were doing well at UF and were pleased to have the opportunity to talk with a UF representative.

People called:	335
People we talked to:	100
Messages left:	108
Non-English speakers:	13
Disconnected, out of service, wrong numbers, no answer:	92
Independent students not called:	22

Next Steps

Based on the results of the first two years of implementation, the Florida Opportunity Scholars coordinating committee believes that the program is achieving its goals of improving access for economically disadvantaged students and enhancing their academic success at UF.

The committee continues to evaluate the program and modify the programs and services as necessary and has implemented the following strategies for 2008-09 and beyond:

- Require attendance at two career planning workshops for second year students.
- Added two advisors from the Academic Advising Center to the FOS coordinating committee to act as liaisons with the college academic advisors and provide academic support services to FOS students. These individuals will help train college academic advisors about the FOS program and its requirements, update the committee about academic policies that might impact students and the FOS program, and provide academic counseling to FOS students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

- Continue to monitor the eligibility requirements of the program and data provided by students to ensure that funds are being offered to the types of students for whom the program was intended; ensure that changes in the federal needs analysis formula do not increase the possibility of otherwise ineligible students appearing as eligible.
- Continue a major fund-raising campaign. The University of Florida Foundation, Inc. kicked off a major campaign to raise funds for the Florida Opportunity Scholars Program in 2007-08. This campaign includes print, multi-media information CD, telephone solicitations and personal visits to potential donors. A number of Florida Opportunity Scholars from the 2006-07 and 2007-08 classes have volunteered to assist in these fund-raising efforts by participating in the telephone campaign, traveling with Foundation representatives speaking at various events, as well as providing written and video testimonials.
- Coordinate support activities with other UF programs. The committee will work closely with the associate provost for undergraduate education as he evaluates university-wide support services to identify areas of overlap between existing programs such as AIM, OASIS, the Alliance Program, Florida Opportunity Scholars, etc. and areas where needs are not being addressed.
- Continue legislative advocacy. The Office for Student Financial Affairs will continue to work with the UF administration, Board of Trustees, Board of Governors, and the Florida legislature to advocate for increased need-based financial aid grant assistance and increased matching dollars for the First Generation Matching Grant Program.

Issues and Concerns

A number of other concerns and needs remain to be addressed in the years to come.

- **Administrative support.** Because of the high visibility of this program, the active student monitoring, and the numerous support services offered, this is a labor-intensive program that requires consistent oversight. The FOS coordinating committee consists of volunteers who have taken on these responsibilities in addition to their normal job duties, but as the program grows, it becomes increasingly important that at least one full-time position and ideally, two, are dedicated to managing the program. Administrative support should be provided to fund one full-time coordinator and a program assistant as well as a graduate assistant to manage the peer mentor program.
- **Funding.** Long term funding for the program remains a most serious concern. In the first year of the program, \$2.1 million was needed to fund the freshman cohort. In 07-08, \$3.7 million was needed. For the third year (08-09), program costs are expected to be \$5.7 million and when fully implemented, the program is projected to need at least \$10 million annually going forward. The program currently relies on relatively small contributions from numerous donors,

substantial support from the University Athletic Association, plus the state match. Funding from the matching program is subject to annual legislative appropriations and on-going support is by no means certain. Appropriations were cut 5% from 2007-08 to 2008-09 and further cutbacks can be anticipated next year due to Florida's severe economic downturn.

Additional funding is also needed to support students enrolling for the first time in the summer and in study abroad opportunities. However, most state and federal grant programs are not available for the summer terms, so nearly 100% of the students' costs must be funded through institutional aid.

- Eligibility criteria. To ensure consistency and fairness in the program over time, the University must continue to evaluate what, if any, changes to eligibility criteria should be considered. The program should continue to assist the most needy first-generation students while limiting the number of students who might on the surface appear to qualify but whose families are, in fact, in a strong financial position. At the same time, care should be taken to ensure that eligible families are not deterred from applying because of difficult, confusing, or cumbersome rules or processes. Also the number of recipients must be balanced with the financial resources available to fund the program. Options to consider include:
 - Index the income cap to inflation. Currently, the program has a fixed cap of \$40,000 but over time inflation will reduce the number of families who qualify and reduce the purchasing power of \$40,000 income.
 - Tie program eligibility to social services eligibility such as free or reduced lunch qualifications. The design of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and its relationship to the U.S. tax code legitimately allows a significant amount of income and assets to be sheltered from consideration in determining family contribution. Consequently, this can make it difficult to distinguish the "truly needy" from the "newly needy." Use of social service eligibility could reduce this problem since families with sufficient income rarely try to qualify for these services due to a perceived "stigma." However, even some families who would qualify for these services choose not to, for the same reason. There is risk that some students for whom the Florida Opportunity Scholars program was designed might not be considered.
 - Tie the income limits to the federal poverty level. Using this index or some multiple thereof (e.g., 150% or 200% of poverty level) would provide a sliding scale of eligibility that takes family size into account. The current \$40,000 cap advantages small families but disadvantages large families since \$40,000 income provides a significantly different standard of living for a family of two than it would for a family of five or six. A large family with a \$50,000 annual income could actually be needier than a family of two with \$38,000, but they do not currently qualify for the program. However, any type of sliding scale adds a layer of complexity to

program administration and is far more difficult for students and families to understand. The current guidelines are very easy to understand and families generally can tell immediately if they meet eligibility guidelines.

- Use a different need analysis methodology, such as the College Scholarship Service PROFILE form, that provides more detailed family financial information. This would enable us to better target dollars to the students for whom the program was designed. However, this adds an additional level of complexity that could deter some families from applying. There are also costs involved for these services and some applicants might have to pay a processing fee even though waivers are available for the neediest students.
- Community college transfers. Currently, the FOS program is only open to students who enter UF as first-time-in-college students. Since the program is being phased in one entering class at a time, only freshmen were funded in 2006-07, freshmen and renewal sophomores in 2007-08 and freshman and renewal sophomores and juniors in 2008-09. Community college transfers remain ineligible regardless of financial background, primarily due to the cost of expanding the program. Program expansion is not a reasonable option until more stable funding for the program has a whole has been achieved.

Summary

The second year of the Florida Opportunity Scholars Program was extremely successful, resulting in an admissions yield rate of 81% as compared 64.1% for the entire freshman class. Academic retention is excellent, with retention rates comparable to or exceeding UF rates for the same cohort classes of students.

In addition, the services provided offer a framework for student academic, social, and emotional support that can be expanded and enhanced in future years while offering the potential for even greater successes in years to come.

It is the Florida Opportunity Scholars coordinating committee's assessment that the offer of a full grant package was a very significant factor in the high admissions yield rate, but that the support services and networking opportunities are the key factors which enabled these students to be retained at the same rate or higher than their cohort class at large.

2007-08 Florida Opportunity Scholars Support Committee

Ms. Karen Fooks (Chair)
Student Financial Affairs

Mr. Ron Anderson
Student Financial Affairs

Dr. Mary Kay Carodine
Dean of Students Office

Mr. Jon Carroll
Student Affairs

Ms. Leslie Hahn
Dean of Students Office

Mr. Greg Henderscheidt
Career Resource Center

Dr. Dana Peterson
AIM Program

Mr. Vince Roberts
Housing & Residence Education

Dr. Shari Robinson
University Counseling Center

2007-08 Florida Opportunity Scholarship Information

What is the Florida Opportunity Scholarship?

The Florida Opportunity Scholarship Program (FOS) is a new initiative to assure qualified students that their financial need for their undergraduate education at the University of Florida will be fully met with grants and scholarships and recipients will not need to work or borrow.

Who Qualifies for the Florida Opportunity Scholarship?

Recipients must meet all of the following criteria:

- Florida resident as determined by the University Registrar
- First-time in college student admitted to an undergraduate program beginning Summer 2006 or later
- Neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree
- Parent's total annual income is less than \$40,000 and assets other than a home are less than \$50,000
- Demonstrate financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

How much will I receive?

The amount each student will receive differs depending on the student's expected family contribution as determined by the FAFSA and other grants and scholarships the student receives. The Florida Opportunity Scholarship, along with other grants and scholarships, will provide sufficient grant funds to meet 100% of a student's financial need. Financial need is the average cost of attendance minus the expected family contribution as determined by the information you provided on the FAFSA. We may require copies of tax returns or other documentation to verify the information on your FAFSA.

What must I do to participate in this program?

- Read, sign, and return one copy of the certification on the reverse side of this form
- Enroll for at least 12 credit hours each term
- Enroll in SLS 1102 "Enhancing the Freshmen Experience" in one of your first two semesters of enrollment at UF
- Participate in the FOSP Seminar series during your first and second year
- Actively participate in an approved mentorship program

More information about the seminar series and mentorship programs will follow at a later date.

How long can I receive the scholarship?

Students who continue to meet renewal eligibility requirements can receive the award for ten semesters or until the student earns a baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first.

What are the renewal requirements?

- Earn 24 credit hours each academic year
- Maintain a 2.0 overall UF grade point average
- Family financial situation remains substantially the same
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid each year

**University of Florida
2007-2008 Florida Opportunity Scholars
Eligibility Certification**

I certify:

- I am a Florida resident
- Neither of my parents has earned a bachelor's degree or higher at any college or university.
- I have read, understand and agree to the terms and conditions of this award.
- The information I provided on the FAFSA is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Name (Please Print): _____ UF ID: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this signed form to: The Office for Student Financial Affairs, University of Florida, P.O. Box 114025, Gainesville, FL 32611-4025 or fax it to: Student Financial Affairs (352) 392-2861.

FOS Recipients by County of Residence

> 10% of FOS recipients

Miami-Dade 32%
Broward 16%

5-10% of FOS recipients

Orange 8%
Palm Beach 7%
Duval 5%

2-5% of FOS recipients

Hillsborough 4%
Pinellas 4%
Alachua 3%
Volusia 2%
Marion 2%

< 2% of FOS recipients

Bay	Manatee
Brevard	Martin
Charlotte	Monroe
Citrus	Nassau
Clay	Okaloosa
Collier	Osceola
Columbia	Pasco
Escambia	Polk
Flagler	Putnam
Gilchrist	Santa Rosa
Highlands	Sarasota
Indian River	Seminole
Lake	St. Johns
Lee	St. Lucie
Leon	Union
Levy	Walton
	Washington

FOS Recipients by Major

Exploratory Major	116*	Civil Engineering	5
Psychology	49	Computer Engineering	5
Criminal Justice	39	Mechanical Engineering	5
Health Science	33	Telecommunication	5
Nursing	31	Decision and Info Science	4
Anthropology	28	Economics	4
Finance	28	Electrical Engineering	4
Family Youth & Com	22	French	4
Political Science	22	Materials Sci & Eng	4
Sociology	22	East Asian Lang & Lit	3
English	19	Linguistics	3
Journalism	19	Mathematics	3
Public Relations	18	Russian	3
Business Administration	15	Agriculture & Bio Eng	2
Interdisciplinary Studies	14	Building Construction	2
Microbiology	13	Classical Studies	2
Pharmacy	13	Food & Resource Economics	2
Accounting	12	Industrial Engineering	2
Interdisciplinary Engineering Studies	12	Interior Design	2
Chemistry	11	Nuclear Engineering	2
Food Science & Human Nutrition	11	Physics	2
History	11	Statistics	2
Advertising	10	Zoology	2
Biology	10	Agriculture Ed & Comm	1
Elementary Education	10	Art	1
Sports Management	10	Art History	1
Health Ed & Behavior	9	Astronomy	1
Marketing	9	Athletic Training	1
Comm Sci & Disorders	8	Botany	1
Management	8	Comp & Info Science	1
Recreation Parks & Tourism	8	Eng Surveying & Mapping	1
Aerospace Engineering	7	Environmental Science	1
Architecture	7	Fine Arts	1
Animal Sciences	6	German	1
Chemical Engineering	6	Music	1
Graphic Design	6	Philosophy	1
Physiology and Kinesiology	6	Portuguese	1
Spanish	6	Wildlife Ecol & Conserv	1

- Students participating in the AIM program do not declare a major during their first year.

Florida Opportunity Scholars 2007-08 Assessment Results

Fall 2007

190 Respondents
41 Male
149 Female

Spring 2008

194 Respondents
39 Male
155 Female

Academic Success

I am confident in my ability to succeed academically at UF.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	3.6%	1.0%	6.2 %	45.6%	43.5%
Spring	3.2%	0.5 %	6.9%	43.6%	45.7%

Please explain your answer (asked Spring 2008 survey only).

Strongly Disagree: (5 of 119)*

Can succeed with

Hard work/ determination 2

Learned to manage time 1

Other 2

**The responses lead us to believe that these students misread the question and meant to choose strongly agree.*

Neutral: (10 of 119)

Trying but not always with success 3

Trying to improve grades 2

Not sure yet 2

Other 3

Agree/ Strongly Agree: (104 of 119)

Can succeed with:

Hard work/ determination 51

Resources (tutoring/mentors) 15

Financial security 3

Challenging but trying 15

Other 20

I understand proper study habits.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	2.1%	3.6%	11.9%	59.1%	23.3%
Spring	1.1%	4.3%	10.2%	57.2%	27.3%

Please rate your study habits:

	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Strong	Very Strong
Fall	2.6%	10.9%	43.0%	38.9%	4.7%
Spring	0.0%	14.4%	41.2%	38.0%	6.4%

I chose my major based on: (Please check all that apply.) (Asked Fall 2007 only)

My Own Academic Interests	84.5%
Financial Stability in the Future	47.7%
Prestige of My Chosen Career	29.0%
Class Taken in High School or College	23.8%
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	16.6%
Other (22 responses)	12.4%
Interests me/ Is my passion	11
Prior Experiences	6
Have not Chosen a Major	3
Changed my Major to Something Practical	1
Cousin	1

Do you have a set study schedule? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	7.0%	13.4%	52.4%	23.5%	3.7%

Do you have a quiet place to read or study? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	0.0%	5.3%	31.0%	41.2%	22.5%

Do you complete assigned readings before class? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	2.2%	14.0%	40.3%	34.4%	9.1%

Do you take detailed notes during class? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	0.0%	3.8%	27.0%	38.9%	30.3%

Do you engage in procrastinating (putting off class assignments until the last minute)? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	1.6%	17.2%	57.0%	21.0%	3.2%

Do you engage in cramming (putting off studying for an exam until the last minute)? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	4.3%	22.0%	51.1%	19.4%	3.2%

Do you participate in study groups? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Spring	13.4%	36.4%	37.4%	12.8%	0.0%

I chose my major based on (please check all that apply): (Asked Spring only)

My Own Academic Interests	83.3%
Financial Stability in the Future	44.1%
Prestige of My Chosen Career	28.0%
Class Taken in HS or College	25.8%
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	19.9%
High School Teacher	11.3%
Sibling (s)	7.5%
Friend (s)	5.4%
Other	8.6%

Have you changed your major since you began at UF? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Yes	No
Spring	33.3%	66.7%

I changed my major for the following reasons (Mark all that apply): (Asked Spring 2008 only)

Discovered a New Interest	50.8%
Career Plans Changed	36.1%
My Previous Major was too Difficult	34.4%
Did not realize my current major existed when I originally declared a major	11.5%
Other	26.2%

Throughout the fall semester how many times did you meet with an academic advisor? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

0	1.6%
1-2	66.1%
3-4	25.8%
5-6	3.2%
7 or more	3.2%

I feel that meeting with an academic advisor was valuable. (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Spring	1.6%	3.2%	14.5%	56.5%	24.4%

I met with an academic advisor to (please check all that apply): (Asked Spring 2008)

Choose classes for the next semester	72.6%
Change major	66.1%
Discuss degree requirements	61.3%
Drop a class	45.2%
Lift a hold	33.9%
Other	12.9%
Information (2 of 7)	
Withdrawal (1 of 7)	
Requirement (1 of 7)	

Financial Literacy

I feel as if I have enough financial support to attend UF.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	.5%	6.2%	16.1%	40.4%	36.8%
Spring	1.1%	7.0%	13.5%	43.8%	34.6%

I understand the basics of money management.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	0.0%	2.1%	8.0%	48.9%	41.0%
Spring	0.0%	0.5%	10.8%	48.4%	40.3%

I have developed a budget for spending.

	Yes	No
Fall	76.2%	23.8%
Spring	78.5%	21.5%

I regularly spend within my budget.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	.5%	8.9%	24.5%	41.1%	25.0%
Spring	1.6%	10.2%	28.0%	41.1%	18.8%

My understanding of money management comes from (check all that apply):

	Fall	Spring
My Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	82.9%	85.9%
Financial Management Workshop	37.8%	58.7%
First Year Florida class	19.2%	23.9%
Financial Affairs Staff	13.5%	12.5%
FOS Mentor	10.9%	9.2%
My Sibling(s)	10.9%	10.3%
Teacher	0.0%	6.0%
Other	14.0%	11.4%
Personal Experience/ Taught Myself	14	14
Common Sense	4	0
Workshops/ Classes	3	0
Family Member/other person	3	0
I have no Money Management	1	0

I currently have a part-time job. (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Yes	No
Spring	15.8%	84.2%

I plan on getting a part-time job for the 2008-2009 academic year. (Asked Spring 2008 only)

	Yes	No
Spring	49.5%	50.5%

Campus Resources

I feel there is a support system available to me at the University of Florida.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	0%	2.6%	14.1%	44.8%	38.5%
Spring	0.0%	2.2%	21.0%	50.3%	26.5%

For me, this support system consists of:

	Fall	Spring
Friend(s)	80.0%	83.1%
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	75.6%	77.0%
FOS Mentor	51.8%	42.7%
FYF Instructor	42.0%	23.0%
Academic Advisor	41.5%	46.6%
FYF Peer Leader	39.4%	16.9%
Sibling(s)	39.4%	42.1%
High School Teacher	21.2%	14.0%
AIM Program	20.7%	16.3%
College Professor	18.7%	16.3%
OASIS Program	13%	12.9%
Other	13%	9.6%
Campus Programs (PAACT/UMPP etc.)	8	3
Clubs and Organizations	6	5
Family	3	3
My Own Motivation to Succeed	3	0
Boyfriend	0	2
Sorority Sisters	0	2

When necessary I have used the following support (check all that apply):

	Fall	Spring
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)	81.3%	87.1%
Friend(s)	76.7%	84.8%
FOS Mentor	20.7%	33.7%
High School Teacher	18.1%	18.5%
Academic Advisor	18.1%	55.6%
FYF Peer Leader	11.4%	14.0%
FYF Instructor	10.4%	19.1%
Siblings		46.6%
College Professor		25.8%
Other	8.8%	
AIM – 4 (of 20)	11.2%	
Other Campus Programs (PAACT, CAAP) – 3 (of 20)		5/10
Spiritual Services – 3 (of 20)		

If and when I have utilized this support system it has provided me the support I needed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Fall	0.0%	.5%	10.5%	46.6%	42.4%
Spring	0.5%	0.0%	9.3%	62.1%	28.0%

In what area(s) would you like more support? (Asked Spring 2008 only)

Academics (study skills, tutoring):	10
Career resources (internships, jobs):	3
Financial:	11
Academic Advising (major choice, classes):	7
Personal (relationships, mental health):	4
AIM Program:	3
Other (motivation, UF and scholarship info):	8
Have enough support:	16

Division of Student Affairs • P.O. Box 113250 • Gainesville, FL 32611-3250
