

Florida College System Recommendations for the Review of Space Need Calculation Methodology

Background

The 2019 Legislature directed the State Board of Education to “*review its space need calculation methodology, developed pursuant to section 1013.31, Florida Statutes, to incorporate improvements, efficiencies, or changes*” with the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 190. Both the space needs calculation formulas and the educational plant survey process for the Florida College System are detailed in the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, incorporated in rule 6A-2.0010, Florida Administrative Code.

Through a survey, the Division of Florida Colleges and college representatives identified a number of issues relating to the current educational plant survey process, the current space needs formulas and the need for greater efficiencies. There is support for updated space need formulas and a survey process that will address the different needs at each college as they respond to their local communities and the state. As with the funding model, there is a need for a process that will account for institution size, age of facilities and infrastructure, academic and workforce program mix, space suitability, clientele and plans for growth. (College survey responses attached as Appendix B.)

Colleges have the challenge of enrollments being counter-cyclical with employment rates. When employment rates are up, college enrollments go down, and when employment rates go down, college enrollments go up. This translates to colleges being counter-cyclical with state funding highs and lows, as well. Since Florida’s employment rates have been up for the past several years, college enrollments have declined. Rather than adding new square footage, college projects have focused on their aging facilities and infrastructure, with the majority of projects slated for renovation, remodel or replacement of key facilities as they focus on new workforce programs and more online course delivery in general education. In addition to these projects, colleges have critical deferred maintenance needs with a currently identified estimated cost of over \$250 million. Meanwhile, there are a few colleges that have growing enrollment, or growth in a new area of their district, and thus a need for additional space. There is a direct correlation between space needs and enrollment growth goals.

The Florida College System Council of Presidents (COP) requested that the Council of Business Affairs (COBA) create a task force to evaluate and make recommendations about space usage pursuant to the passage of SB 190 in 2019. This task force was established at the COBA meeting in September 2019 and consists of the business officers from seven colleges of varying sizes and locations in the Florida College System. (Letter from COP/COBA Task Force members attached as Appendix A.)

Issue 1: College Space and Current Space Formulas Need Review

Recommendation 1:

Review and make recommendations regarding current college space needs, including the Space Needs Generation Formulas and the Size of Space and Occupant Design Criteria Tables in Chapter 6 of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities. Specific points to address include:

- Need for suitable lab space, particularly in facilities that do not have modern equipment to facilitate lab instruction or for new workforce programs requiring vocational labs;
- Need for advanced technology in many classrooms to allow maximization of course offerings and scheduling;
- Need for flexible, large-sized classrooms to facilitate modern teaching platforms;
- General review of space trends and any additional space needs;
- Quality of existing space and the suitability of that space for modern teaching platforms;
- Differences in program and space needs between smaller, rural colleges and larger, urban colleges;
- Need for collaborative student and learning spaces;
- Location of some campuses in older, established areas that do not match current service area migration patterns;
- Work schedules/transportation/child care issues of nontraditional students served to take classes during evening and weekend time slots.

Issue 2: Related Facilities Issues Need to be Addressed

Recommendation 2:

Review and make recommendations on related facilities issues, including the educational plant survey content and process. There is a need for review of space utilization to consider revising and expanding reporting procedures to address use of space for all training, including use of space by charter and collegiate schools, and other colleges and universities. Other items to consider related to space and facilities are as follows:

- Evaluation of mission-driven location and co-location;
- Retention of students and faculty;
- Consideration of space condition (such as use of a facility condition index) and the related useful life of older facilities as part of the educational plant survey;
- Consideration of infrastructure needs as part of the educational plant survey;
- Evaluation of the need by headcount in addition to FTE to reflect service demand such as parking, tutoring, advising, etc., that are not reduced when a student attends part-time. The space and costs to run such support services are equal regardless of student credit hour. As primarily commuter campuses, this is important to note;

- Comparison to regional/national norms for 2-year college students to include the support of non-traditional and geographically dispersed (often rural) student populations as reflected in our statutory mission, “In order to maximize open access for students, respond to community needs for postsecondary academic education and career degree education....” (Section 1001.60(1), Florida Statutes.)

Issue 3: Collaborative Task Force

Recommendation 3:

The Division of Florida Colleges should work with the COP/COBA task force in consultation with Florida College System facilities planners, college leadership and the Office of Educational Facilities to review and make recommendations regarding updates to the current space needs methodology, utilization reporting and the educational plant survey process, and explore other efficiencies and streamlining of processes as outlined in the previous recommendations.