

**2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request**  
**Beyond the Top 100:**  
**Elevating Excellence | Inspiring Digital Transformation**

**State University System  
Education and General  
2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request  
Form I**

<b>University(s):</b>	<b>Florida A&amp;M University</b>
<b>Request Title:</b>	<b>Beyond the Top 100: Elevating Excellence   Inspiring Digital Transformation</b>
<b>Date Request Approved by University Board of Trustees:</b>	<b>May 29, 2024</b>
<b>Recurring Funds Requested:</b>	<b>\$55.5 million</b>
<b>Non-Recurring Funds Requested:</b>	
<b>Total Funds Requested:</b>	<b>\$55.5 million</b>
<b>Please check the request type below:</b>	
<b>Shared Services/System-Wide Request</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Unique Request</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**I. Purpose -**

1. Describe the overall purpose of the plan, specific goal(s) and metrics, specific activities that will help achieve the goal(s), and how these goals and initiatives align with strategic priorities and accountability plan established by each university (include whether this is a new or expanded service/program). If expanded, what has been accomplished with the current service/program?
2. Describe any projected impact on academic programs, student enrollments, and student services.

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University requests \$55 million in recurring funding for strategic investments to support the implementation of the University’s five-year strategic plan - *Boldly Striking*.**

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) continues its upward trajectory in the national public university rankings, currently positioned at No. 91 according to the esteemed U.S. News & World Report. Additionally, FAMU proudly holds the title of the No. 1 Public Historically Black College & University for the past four consecutive years. Renowned as a leading producer of African American graduates in STEM and health disciplines, FAMU stands as a vanguard of innovation and digital readiness within the State University System (SUS), prioritizing accessibility and affordability for first-generation and low-income students. These

achievements underscore FAMU's pivotal role in addressing critical needs in Florida and the nation, preparing a diverse cohort of students for success in the digital age.

In alignment with its 2022-2027 strategic plan, FAMU sets forth ambitious goals aimed at further enhancing performance outcomes, rankings, and institutional profile. These objectives include ascending to the top tier of SUS institutions in Performance Based Funding outcomes, achieving recognition as a Top 100 national public university, and attaining a coveted Carnegie R1 Research institution designation, currently classified as R2. To realize these aspirations, substantial and sustained investments are imperative to attract and retain high-achieving students, bolster support for faculty excellence, and fortify the University's signature academic programs, ensuring they are primed for the demands of the digital era.

The requested resources are pivotal in propelling FAMU toward these objectives. Key areas of focus include augmenting graduation rates and first-time licensure pass rates, amplifying degree production within Programs of Strategic Emphasis (PSE), cultivating a cadre of world-class faculty through strategic recruitment and development initiatives, and fostering increased research productivity. By prioritizing these strategic initiatives, FAMU solidifies its position as a trailblazer in innovation and digital preparedness, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and addressing the evolving needs of society in the digital transformation and the digital age.

In line with our commitment to digital transformation and operational efficiency, the allocated resources will be strategically directed towards key areas where AI integration can drive impactful outcomes:

- ***Elevating graduation rates and optimizing first-time licensure pass rates:*** FAMU is dedicated to leveraging AI-powered initiatives and support frameworks to bolster student success metrics. By deploying targeted interventions and harnessing digital tools, we aim to elevate graduation rates while ensuring our graduates excel in licensure examinations, thus enhancing their preparedness for the professional arena.
- ***Amplifying degree production in Programs of Strategic Emphasis:*** Embracing digital transformation, FAMU prioritizes the expansion of degree programs aligned with strategic objectives. Through the integration of AI-driven analytics and predictive modeling, we aim to identify and invest in areas poised for growth, facilitating the alignment of academic offerings with the evolving demands of industries and communities, thereby driving regional and national development.

- ***Cultivating a world-class faculty cohort:*** Attracting and retaining top-tier faculty members is paramount to FAMU's mission. By harnessing AI-driven recruitment platforms and optimizing operational processes, we are committed to assembling a diverse and dynamic faculty community. Through competitive compensation structures, personalized professional development pathways, and supportive digital ecosystems, we aim to create an intellectually stimulating environment conducive to groundbreaking research and transformative teaching practices.
- ***Fostering research excellence through digital innovation:*** As a trailblazer for HBCUs nationally in digital research methodologies, FAMU endeavors to fortify its position as a hub of innovation. FAMU will create a new academic department, Data Science and Innovation, housed in the College of Science and Technology. By harnessing AI algorithms for data analysis, investing in cutting-edge research infrastructure, and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations facilitated by digital platforms, we aim to enhance research productivity across diverse domains. This academic department will serve programs to align with workforce needs, university wide micro-credentialing and to provide a holistic approach not only propels the frontiers of knowledge but also equips us to address pressing societal challenges with agility and efficacy.

Through the strategic investment of resources on these concentrated initiatives, FAMU is poised to amplify its already impressive achievements, and advance its legacy of impact within the State of Florida and across the broader national landscape.

## **A. Academic Excellence (Total Recurring) \$35.5 million**

### ***Academic Excellence for the Digital Age***

FAMU Academic Excellence for the Digital Age legislative funding request aims to propel Florida A&M University (FAMU) into a new era of educational innovation and student success through the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) technologies. With this funding, FAMU seeks to establish pioneering programs that harness the power of AI and ML to revolutionize teaching, learning, and research. By leveraging these cutting-edge technologies, FAMU will enhance personalized learning experiences, optimize academic support services, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration across campus. Through strategic investments in faculty training, infrastructure development, and research initiatives, FAMU will position itself as a leader in preparing students for the digital workforce of tomorrow. This legislative funding request

represents a bold step forward in advancing FAMU's mission of academic excellence, innovation, and diversity in the digital age.

### ***Increasing Graduation Rates***

Our current four-year graduation rate stands at 34%, a figure that falls short of our aspirations for student success. By investing in academic support services, such as tutoring programs and advising initiatives, we aim to raise this rate to 50% within the specified timeframe. This increase will not only benefit individual students by reducing the time to degree completion but also contribute to the economic prosperity of our state by producing a more educated workforce.

### ***Enhancing Academic Progress***

While our institution boasts an impressive academic progress rate of 82%, we recognize the importance of continuous improvement. Through targeted interventions and innovative teaching methodologies, we aim to elevate this rate to 90%, ensuring that students are not only progressing academically but also mastering key competencies necessary for success in their chosen fields.

### ***Elevating Academic Standards***

The average admitted GPA of our students currently stands at 4.00, reflecting the high caliber of individuals we attract to our institution. However, we are committed to raising the bar even higher by increasing the average admitted GPA to 4.25. Achieving this goal will require strategic investments in recruiting efforts, scholarship programs, and academic incentives to attract top-tier talent to our campus.

### ***Strengthening College Readiness***

A concerning statistic highlighted in our student profile is the low percentage of students who enter our institution fully prepared for college-level coursework in calculus. Less than 10% of our incoming students meet this criterion, posing a significant barrier to academic success in STEM disciplines. Through targeted interventions, including pre-college preparatory courses and early assessment programs, we aim to increase the percentage of students deemed calculus-ready to over 50%, ensuring that all students have the foundational knowledge necessary to excel in their chosen fields of study.

### ***Fostering Academic Excellence through Digital Learning ~ Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning***

FAMU Academic Excellence for the Digital Age legislative funding request represents a multifaceted initiative aimed at advancing Florida A&M University's (FAMU) commitment to innovation and academic excellence. In addition to leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning

(ML) technologies to revolutionize teaching, learning, and research, FAMU will strategically build new programs of strategic emphasis (PSE) that integrate AI and ML across disciplines. This expansion will significantly increase the number of programs, courses, and majors infused with AI and ML methodologies, ensuring that FAMU remains at the forefront of preparing students for the digital workforce. Moreover, FAMU will introduce micro-credentialing and certificate programs tailored to meet the evolving needs of industries impacted by AI and ML advancements, providing students with specialized skills and credentials to enhance their career prospects. By integrating AI and ML into the curriculum and offering targeted micro-credentialing opportunities, FAMU will empower students to thrive in the digital age and contribute meaningfully to their fields.

As we embark on this transformative journey, FAMU remains dedicated to recognizing and nurturing academic talent through programs like the National Merit Scholars and Florida Bright Futures Scholars, with the aim of cultivating a community of scholars poised to make significant contributions to our institution and beyond. With the necessary funding and resources, FAMU is poised to shape the future of education and empower students to excel in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Furthermore, as part of the FAMU Academic Excellence for the Digital Age initiative, the university will establish the FAMU Center for Cyber-studies. This center will serve as a hub for interdisciplinary research, education, and outreach focused on cybersecurity, addressing the growing demand for skilled professionals in this critical field. Through collaborations with industry partners and government agencies, the center will develop cutting-edge solutions to safeguard digital infrastructure and combat emerging cyber threats.

Additionally, FAMU will introduce certificate programs in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), providing students with hands-on training and practical skills to thrive in the evolving workforce. These certificate programs will complement existing academic offerings, equipping students with specialized expertise and credentials that are highly sought after in today's job market. By investing in the FAMU Center for Cyber-studies and certificate programs in AI and ML, FAMU demonstrates its commitment to preparing students for success in the digital age and driving innovation in key industries.

In addition to these quantitative metrics, we are also committed to recognizing and nurturing academic talent through programs such as the National Merit Scholars and Florida Bright Futures Scholars. While our current numbers fall short of our aspirations, we are confident that with the

necessary funding and resources, we can cultivate a community of scholars who will make significant contributions to our institution and beyond.

### ***College and School Academic Excellence Initiatives***

As Florida A&M University (FAMU) continues its commitment to academic excellence, we recognize the paramount importance of embracing digital transformation to propel our institution into the future. Throughout our 14 colleges and schools, FAMU currently offers a comprehensive array of degree programs, spanning 54 bachelor's degrees, 29 master's degrees, three professional degrees, and 12 doctoral degrees. However, to ensure that our scholars remain at the forefront of their respective fields, we seek legislative support for strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing digital transformation within our academic landscape.

### **Strategic Needs**

- **FAMU Health:** As outlined in the Boldly Striking Strategic Plan, FAMU Health occupies a pivotal position, serving as a cornerstone for academic excellence, research innovation, and community engagement. To realize its full potential and achieve the ambitious goals set forth in the strategic plan, it is imperative to prioritize the enhancement of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation within FAMU Health and the broader field of Integrated Health Sciences.
  - **Maximizing Health Research Impact:** FAMU Health is uniquely positioned to lead groundbreaking research initiatives that address pressing health disparities and challenges facing underserved communities. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers from an array of health backgrounds, including public health, nursing, pharmacy, and allied health sciences, we can leverage complementary expertise to tackle complex health issues comprehensively.
  - **Advancing Educational Excellence:** The integration of interdisciplinary perspectives into academic programs within FAMU Health will enrich the educational experience for students and prepare them to excel in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. By offering experiential learning opportunities, we can cultivate well-rounded healthcare professionals equipped to address the multifaceted needs of diverse populations.
- **Digital and Physical Infrastructure Enhancement:** To meet the evolving demands of education, our first strategic priority involves fortifying both our digital and physical infrastructure. This encompasses enhancing our digital capabilities by upgrading network infrastructure, ensuring widespread access to high-speed internet across campus, and implementing rigorous cybersecurity measures to

safeguard valuable academic data. Furthermore, there is a critical need to expand and improve our physical facilities, including classroom and laboratory spaces, to accommodate a growing student population and facilitate cutting-edge research initiatives. These infrastructure elements will include utilizing front facing and rear strengthening ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software. By implementing processes with an ERP, programmatic changes put in place to reduce barriers that mitigate student success will assist with student interface in financial aid, student support and other factors. Additionally, enhancements to residential life and food spaces are essential to support student well-being and foster a vibrant campus community.

- **Faculty Development in Digital Pedagogy:** To effectively leverage digital tools and technologies in the classroom, faculty members require specialized training and ongoing professional development. Funding will be allocated towards initiatives aimed at equipping faculty with the necessary skills and resources to integrate digital pedagogy seamlessly into their teaching practices.
  - **Faculty Recruitment for Digital Transformation:** Recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty remains a critical need in support of the University's strategic plan goals to provide students with exceptional learning experiences, increase student success, increase research productivity, and ensure compliance with accreditation standards. FAMU intends to recruit and retain world-class faculty of excellence who will focus on high-level research engagement and extend research studies in science, engineering, health care, mental health, and social sciences. These areas of focus for faculty researchers align with the University's strategic plan and will allow the FAMU schools and colleges to market themselves as top producers of research and grant funding. This investment into highly productive faculty will reduce barriers associated with establishing solid research agendas by providing the ability to employ teaching assistants and research assistants to work with faculty and enhance their operational and academic outcomes.
- **Accreditation Support Services:** This strategy aims to aid FAMU as we seek accreditation from our national accreditor. We will begin by offering personalized consultations to institutions to assess their readiness for accreditation and identify areas for improvement. Our team of experienced accreditation specialists to develop tailored action plans, provide guidance on documentation requirements, and offer training workshops to faculty and staff. Throughout the accreditation process, we will offer ongoing support, including mock site visits, feedback on self-study reports, and assistance with addressing any



deficiencies identified by our accreditation review teams. Additionally, we will maintain open lines of communication with institutions, providing timely updates, resources, and best practices to ensure a smooth and successful accreditation experience. Through these efforts, we are committed to facilitating the accreditation process, promoting institutional excellence, and upholding the highest standards of quality assurance in higher education.

- **Student Support Services for Digital Literacy:** In an increasingly digital-centric world, it is imperative that our students possess strong digital literacy skills to thrive academically and professionally. Legislative funding will support the establishment of student support services focused on enhancing digital literacy, including workshops, tutoring, and access to online resources and tutorials.
- **Library Enhancement, Research, and Innovation in Digital Technologies:** FAMU is committed to cultivating a culture of research and innovation in digital technologies spanning diverse disciplines. Funding will be allocated to bolster faculty-led research endeavors aimed at investigating the potential applications of emerging digital technologies across various fields. These include but are not limited to artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, and cybersecurity. Additionally, investments will be made to enhance library resources, ensuring that students and faculty have access to the latest digital tools and information necessary to drive research and scholarship.
- **Faculty Research Excellence:** Research excellence among faculty is indeed imperative to increase capacity in each discipline. Faculty members who excel in research play a crucial role in advancing knowledge and contributing to the overall growth and development of their respective disciplines and add notable value to the institution and the state university system. FAMU will continuously invest in the faculty to allow opportunities to increase research capacity and teaching excellence. Faculty engaged in high-quality research bring their expertise and cutting-edge knowledge into the classroom. They can share the latest developments, real-world applications, and interdisciplinary perspectives with students. This enhances the learning experience and prepares students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and future leaders in their fields.
- **Infrastructure for Virtual/Online Learning Environments:** With the growing demand for flexible learning options, FAMU recognizes the need to invest in infrastructure to support virtual learning environments. Legislative support will enable the development of state-

of-the-art virtual learning platforms, interactive multimedia content, and virtual reality simulations to enhance the online learning experience for students.

In addition to creating a virtual learning structure, FAMU Online will offer a robust approach to creating pathways and increasing access to education for both undergraduate and graduate students. Launching a fully online academic unit at FAMU is an exciting initiative that will provide access and flexibility for individuals who want to pursue degrees without the barrier of brick and mortar.

#### Administrative Support Software and Personnel

- Administrative software for online tracking and monitoring processes for online curricular programs.
- Online enhancements for cybersecurity and internal and external controls for operational support.
- Manage day-to-day operations of the online academic unit.
- Coordinate scheduling, administrative tasks, and logistics.
- Assist with budget management and financial operations.
- Liaise with other departments and stakeholders within FAMU.

#### Online Success Coaches

- Provide guidance and support to online students throughout their academic journey.
- Assist students in setting goals and developing study plans.
- Monitor student progress and address any challenges they may face.
- Offer resources and strategies for online learning success.

#### Student Success Counselors

- Guide students in choosing appropriate programs and courses.
- Assist with course registration, transfer credits, and academic planning.
- Monitor academic progress and help students stay on track to meet their goals.
- Provide information on degree requirements and university policies.
- Trained in financial aid, data analysis, and career development.

#### Student Services Experts

- Offer comprehensive support services to online students.
- Assist with admissions and enrollment processes.
- Provide technical support for online learning platforms.
- Address student inquiries and concerns related to financial aid, scholarships, and other support resources

In addition to these roles, it would be beneficial to ensure that the team members have experience and knowledge of online education platforms, technology tools, and online pedagogy. They should also possess strong communication skills, empathy, and the ability to work effectively with diverse student populations.

By establishing this team, FAMU will be able to provide personalized assistance and support to online students, making their educational experience engaging, inclusive, and successful. This initiative will undoubtedly open doors for individuals across the state, including those with physical exceptionalities, to pursue advanced education at the top public HBCU in the nation.

By offering online programs, FAMU will be able to extend its educational offerings beyond the physical boundaries of its campus, increasing accessibility and providing a flexible and inclusive learning environment for students. This initiative will contribute to expanding the educational reach of FAMU and empowering a broader community of learners to benefit from the University's academic excellence and reputation.

By addressing these strategic needs through legislative funding, FAMU will be better positioned to achieve its mission of academic excellence while preparing our scholars to excel in an increasingly digitized world. We are confident that these investments will yield tangible returns in terms of student success, faculty innovation, and overall institutional competitiveness.

#### ***College of Law Academic Excellence Initiatives***

The College of Law recently celebrated its 20th anniversary after reopening in Orlando in 2002. The College has more than 2,600 graduates who are lawyers and leaders, including 1,600 minority graduates, 1,600 licensed attorneys in Florida, and 11 sitting judges in Florida, Georgia, and Missouri. The College was one of 12 law schools in the nation to receive an A+ rating for diversity in the Winter 2023 edition of Pre-Law magazine. The College's Economic Justice Clinic, launched in January 2023, has supported dozens of clients by providing transactional legal services to underserved businesses, organizations, and individuals to support positive economic development. The EJ Clinic assists clients with business formation, tax exemption, regulatory issues, contract drafting, and heirs' property and engages in public outreach, education, and advocacy to address ongoing issues of economic disparities.

The University endeavors to recruit and retain highly qualified law students and employ new faculty and student support staff, including legal writing instructors, teaching assistants, and administrative staff, to support law school students to success throughout their matriculation on the bar examination, and in the profession. FAMU will implement a legal writing laboratory to provide 1:1 support for law students in mastering this fundamental skill.

*College of Agriculture and Food Sciences Academic Excellence Initiatives*

The College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS) has the research expertise among faculty to double the federal grant dollars and funding capacity. CAFS can further develop the veterinary science program, food sciences, and biological systems engineering with additional lab space for experimentation, updated research space, facilities and equipment. CAFS requires research scientists, teaching assistants, lab managers, lab equipment, and expanded research and classroom laboratory infrastructure. Activities and services that will be provided to meet the intended purpose of the requested funding include natural resource research, education and training activities, and programs for small farmers, including new and beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, Native American Indians, women, and other minorities. Areas of service and activities include precision agriculture, hay production, grazing systems research, organic farming, livestock production and management, aquaculture, aquaponics renewable energy, bioprocessing and product development research, and entrepreneurship development.

As part of CAFS, the FAMU Center for Viticulture and Small Fruit Research was established by the State legislative mandate ("Florida Viticulture Policy Act" in 1978) with the mission "to conduct basic and applied research and provide service that will promote the development of a viable viticulture industry in Florida." The Center has established a 45-year legacy and track record of comprehensive viticulture programming with excellence in research productivity, industry clientele service, student experiential learning, professional and economic development for grape growers, small farmers, and rural communities. The program is fully aligned with the Boldly Striking Strategic Plan: Priority 1: Student Success; Priority 2: Academic Excellence (Goal 2.1 Pursue pathways that position FAMU on a trajectory to become a Carnegie R1 institution); and Priority 3: Leverage the Brand. Renovations and upgrades to the outdated/incapacitated research facilities, and acquisition of essential equipment for innovative and cutting-edge research, would include replacement and upgrades for irrigation, trellises, accessions replacement, tractors, sprayers, and utility vehicles for the 45 acres of research vineyards. The industry benchmark for longevity

with hot and wet climate conditions is up to 15 years under the lifespan of the vineyard. The Center's experimental vineyards have been established in the current location more than 20 years ago. An upgrade, with required maintenance, to the grape and wine processing capacity at the micro-winery level and acquisition of modular unit/storage with sterile conditions for wine supplies including fermenters, bottles, airlocks, and corks, would be among the research improvements.

## **B. Student Success Initiatives (Total Recurring) \$20 million**

FAMU seeks to continue to create pathways to bring social mobility to our graduates by promoting individual and societal advancement. College access and readiness produces higher education opportunities to ensure that students have unlimited opportunities to pursue their educational aspirations regardless of their socio-economic status. Student success and access to higher education, particularly for Pell-eligible students, are vital for achieving excellence in a diverse and learned society.

By providing support and resources to high performing Pell-eligible students, we can bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups and promote social mobility. FAMU recognizes that Pell-eligible students often face additional challenges and barriers to higher education, including financial limitations, inadequate educational preparation, and lack of access to support systems. As we prepare for the future, FAMU has a laser-like focus on prioritizing student access and success to close the achievement gap that exists between different student populations; reducing disparities in educational outcomes; and promoting educational parity. By supporting the success of Pell-eligible students, we invest in our future leaders, professionals, and change-makers who will drive progress and innovation. This work and investment will further the work in our Office of Freshman Studies, First Year Experience, Office of Transfer Student Services, and other student support service areas.

### ***Recruitment Scholarships***

The University is dedicated to enhancing student success by aligning with target goals aimed at improving four-year graduation rates and first-time licensure pass rates, comparable to our State University System (SUS) peers (refer to Table 1). Analysis of both institutional and SUS data underscores a significant link between the academic credentials of incoming students and their achievement outcomes. To this end, the University must bolster ongoing initiatives to attract and retain high-achieving cohorts, including First-Time-In-College (FTIC), Associate of Arts (AA) transfer, and professional students.

Presently, the University allocates scholarships to FTIC students to assist in unmet financial need. STEM and Programs of Strategic Emphasis (PSE) undergraduate and graduate programs. Furthermore, this investment will assist with scholarships for pre-professional programs such as nursing, law, pharmacy, and physical therapy. To elevate recruitment and retention efforts, the University seeks \$10 million in recurring funding, facilitating the annual enrollment of high-achieving undergraduate, graduate and professional students specifically targeting those in PSE degree programs.

In alignment with SUS benchmarks, the University has delineated specific objectives aimed at elevating four-year graduation rates and first-time licensure pass rates. Rigorous examination of institutional and SUS data underscores the pivotal role played by the academic credentials of incoming students in determining success outcomes. To realize these objectives, the University is committed to fortifying existing endeavors in attracting and retaining high-achieving students across diverse categories, encompassing FTIC, AA transfers, and professional cohorts.

#### ***Student Enhancement Priorities***

To enhance student success and strategic initiatives for student development, FAMU seeks an investment in student mental health services, student academic support services, and student experience study spaces. FAMU seeks to be competitive with the nation's top universities and reconfigure learning spaces to meet the needs of current and future generations. FAMU seeks funding investments for redesigned study labs, student mental health facilities, and expanded student academic support areas accessible for FTIC, transfer, and non-traditional students.

#### ***Transfer Student Academic Support Initiatives***

Florida remains the national leader in developing highly effective articulation agreements at the state and local levels between institutions. The University's Ignite Transfer Program goes beyond the traditional articulation agreement and provides increased University access for students who graduate with an AA degree from a Florida College System (FCS) institution.

The University currently has 2+2 articulation agreements with 20 FCS institutions. The importance of this initiative is reflected by the University's BOT Choice Metric in the Performance Funding Model, which targets increased degree production for FCS AA transfers. Achievement of the Performance Funding Metric goals will be facilitated by the expansion of the University's recently established Transfer Center, which is responsible for implementing a systematic approach to partnering with the FCS.

Recurring funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 is requested to equip the Transfer Center with appropriate staffing. Specifically, Transfer Specialists will be hired to work collaboratively with FAMU partner FCS institutions to create a seamless transfer process for prospective students and provide greater clarity regarding pathways to completing a bachelor's degree. The Transfer Specialists will be tasked with ensuring degree maps remain updated and current, articulating students' transfer options, monitoring student progress, facilitating intervention as needed, and assisting students with assessing the financial resources available to them. Transfer specialists will also be responsible for shepherding students from the initial point of contact through their application and enrollment to the University.

**II. Return on Investment** - *Describe the outcome(s) anticipated, dashboard indicator(s) to be improved, or return on investment. Be specific. For example, if this issue focuses on improving retention rates, indicate the current retention rate and the expected increase in the retention rate. Similarly, if the issue focuses on expanding access to academic programs or student services, indicate the current and expected outcomes.*

The FAMU Board of Trustees and Administration are fully committed to further improving institutional outcomes on the Performance Based Funding Metrics and other key performance indicators. The requested funding will support these efforts by enabling the University to strategically target resources and support to areas that will have the greatest impact on increasing student success.

**Benefits to the State:**

- Supports the SUS Strategic Priority to increase student success and access as identified in the 2024 Accountability Plan approved by the Board of Governors.
- Enables FAMU to be more impactful in enhancing the socioeconomic status of first-generation and low-income students. Notably, FAMU ranked No. 23 on the Social Mobility Index for the 2022-23 U.S. News & World Report.
- Addresses critical workforce needs in Florida and the nation.

**Anticipated Outcomes:**

- Increase the four-year graduation rate from 35 percent to 57 percent for the 2024-2028 cohort.
- Increase in academic progress rate from 81.8 percent to 90 percent.
- Increase in degrees awarded to FCS AA transfers from 341 to 400.
- Increase total research expenditures from \$68 million to \$70 million.
- Increase in the number of professional programs that meet state/national benchmarks for first-time pass rates from 1 to 4 (nursing, pharmacy, law, and physical therapy).
- Increase in the percentage of freshmen in the top 10 percent of high school classes from 15 percent to 35 percent by Fall 2027.

- Increase in median wages of bachelor's graduates from \$42,500 to \$43,700.

The Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University 2022-2027 Strategic Plan identifies several ambitious goals designed to elevate the University's performance outcomes, rankings, and profile. These goals include moving into the top tier of State University System (SUS) institutions in annual Performance Based Funding metrics, rising among the Top 100 public university rankings by U.S. World News & Report (currently #91), and being designated as a Carnegie R1 Research institution (currently R2).

As the nation's highest ranked public HBCU for the fifth consecutive year, and amongst the SUS leaders in providing access to higher education for first-generation and low-income students, FAMU remains focused on addressing the critical needs of Florida's citizens and the nation.

Specific focus areas of the "Boldly Striking" Strategic Plan include:

- Increasing retention and graduation rates, and first-time licensure pass rates.
- Increasing degree production in Programs of Strategic Emphasis (PSE's).
- Recruiting, developing, and retaining world-class faculty.
- Increasing research productivity.
- Ensuring long-term fiscal health and sustainability.
- Improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Positioning FAMU as a leader in healthcare education, research, and service.

**III. Personnel** – *Describe personnel hiring and retention plans, making sure to connect both plans to initiative(s) and goal(s) described in section I. State the amount of faculty FTE and staff FTE and estimated funding amounts used for retention and new hires in each category. In describing faculty hires, provide overall hiring goals, including academic area(s) of expertise and anticipated hiring level (e.g. assistant professor, associate professor, full professor). Please describe how funds used for faculty or staff retention will help the institution achieve its stated goals.*

FAMU is known for its strong academic programs and commitment to research. Recruitment and retention of faculty, teaching assistants, research laboratory managers, technologists, and student support specialists indicate FAMU's dedication to providing quality education and fostering a supportive learning environment.

- Faculty members are responsible for teaching courses, conducting research, and providing academic guidance to students. They play a vital role in shaping the educational experience and contributing to the university's research endeavors. FAMU boasts 14 academic colleges and schools, and a need for increased faculty lines is imperative to move to R1 Carnegie Classification. Additional faculty lines will be provided for each school or



college with specific emphasis on those that offer research doctoral degrees, STEM degrees, and programs of strategic emphasis.

- Learning Assistants support faculty members in teaching undergraduate or graduate courses. They often provide instructional support, facilitate discussions, grade assignments, and offer guidance to students.
- Research Laboratory Managers oversee the day-to-day operations of research labs. They are responsible for maintaining equipment, ensuring lab safety protocols are followed, managing research projects, and providing guidance to researchers.
- Technologists are skilled professionals who specialize in using technology and scientific equipment. They support research activities by maintaining and operating lab equipment, assisting with data analysis, and troubleshooting technical issues.
- Student Support Specialists work closely with students to provide guidance, resources, and assistance with academic and personal matters. They may offer academic advising, career counseling, mental health support, or help with navigating campus resources.
- With robust State investment, FAMU seeks to enhance its academic and research infrastructure, aiming to enhance the learning experience and provide students with a supportive environment. Academic Research and Faculty Support Specialists will contribute to the University's mission of academic excellence and innovation.
- Research Librarians possess specialized knowledge in locating and accessing relevant academic resources, including scholarly articles, books, databases, and other research materials. They are skilled in conducting comprehensive literature searches and can help students navigate complex research databases effectively. This expertise is invaluable for graduate students who need to find authoritative sources for their research projects.
- Administrative Personnel and Software Support
  - Manage day-to-day operations of the online academic unit.
  - Coordinate scheduling, administrative tasks, and logistics.
  - Assist with budget management and financial operations.
  - Administrative software for online tracking and monitoring processes for online curricular programs.
  - Online enhancements for cybersecurity and internal and external controls for operational support.
  - Liaise with other departments and stakeholders within FAMU.

- Online Success Coaches
  - Provide guidance and support to online students throughout their academic journey.
  - Assist students in setting goals and developing study plans.
  - Monitor student progress and address any challenges they may face.
  - Offer resources and strategies for online learning success.
  
- Student Success Counselors
  - Guide students in choosing appropriate programs and courses.
  - Assist with course registration, transfer credits, and academic planning.
  - Monitor academic progress and help students stay on track to meet their goals.
  - Provide information on degree requirements and university policies.
  - Trained in financial aid, data analysis and career development.
  
- Student Services Experts
  - Offer comprehensive support services to online students.
  - Assist with admissions and enrollment processes.
  - Provide technical support for online learning platforms.
  - Address student inquiries and concerns related to financial aid, scholarships, and other support resources.

**IV. Facilities** *(If this issue requires an expansion or construction of a facility, please complete the following table.):* **NOT APPLICABLE.**



**2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request**  
**Education and General**  
**Position and Fiscal Summary**  
**Operating Budget Form II**

**University:** Florida A&M University  
**Issue Title:** Beyond the Top 100: Elevating Excellence | Inspiring Digital Transformation

	<u>RECURRING</u>	<u>NON-RECURRING</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>Positions</u>			
Faculty	102.00	0.00	102.00
Other (A&P/USPS)	26.00	0.00	26.00
	-----	-----	-----
Total	128.00	0.00	128.00
	=====	=====	=====
Salaries and Benefits	\$20,908,750	\$0	\$20,908,750
Other Personal Services	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$3,000,000
Expenses	\$591,250	\$0	\$591,250
Operating Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0
Electronic Data Processing	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000
Financial Aid	\$24,500,000	\$0	\$24,500,000
Special Category (Specific)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Faculty Retention	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$3,000,000
<u>Faculty (Digital Trans.)</u>	<u>\$500,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$500,000</u>
<u>Students (Digital Trans.)</u>	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,000,000</u>
	-----	-----	-----
Total All Categories	\$55,500,000	\$0	\$55,500,000
	=====	=====	=====

**2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request  
Accelerating Excellence: Fueling Research and  
Student Success in the Joint College of Engineering**

**State University System  
Education and General  
2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request  
Form I**

<b>University(s):</b>	<b>Florida A&amp;M University and Florida State University</b>
<b>Request Title:</b>	<b>Accelerating Excellence: Fueling Research and Student Success in the Joint College of Engineering</b>
<b>Date Request Approved by University Board of Trustees:</b>	<b>May 29, 2024</b>
<b>Recurring Funds Requested:</b>	<b>\$13,140,328</b>
<b>Non-Recurring Funds Requested:</b>	
<b>Total Funds Requested:</b>	<b>\$13,140,328</b>
<b>Please check the request type below:</b>	
<b>Shared Services/System-Wide Request</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Unique Request</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**I. Purpose**

The FAMU-FSU Joint College of Engineering, established in 1982, stands as a unique collaboration between Florida State University (FSU) and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). It is the only engineering college in the United States that unites the nation’s leading public Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and a top-25 public research university. Over the last four decades, this unique partnership has fostered shared resources, state-of-the-art research facilities at Innovation Park, and a vibrant academic culture that promotes innovation.

**The goal of the FAMU-FSU Joint College of Engineering is to be ranked among the top 50 engineering colleges in the nation within the next five years, aspiring to be the first HBCU engineering college to attain this distinction.**

Under the stewardship of the new Dean, who joined in mid-2022, the College has crafted its first strategic plan, "Engineering our Future (2024-2029)." This plan is devised to advance the strategic goals set forth in the 2023 Accountability Plans of both FAMU and FSU:

- FAMU's objective is to rank among the top 75 public universities and to distinguish itself as the first R1 HBCU, aligning with the College's commitment to student success and an intensive research-based education.

- FSU's goal to become a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU) resonates with the strategic plan's focus on amplifying research and scholastic excellence.
- These goals collectively support Florida's overarching mission to sustain its reputation as the top state for higher education in the nation.

The legislative budget request (LBR) is prepared to procure crucial resources for the Joint College of Engineering, drawing on the mission and vision delineated in the "Engineering our Future" strategic plan. The objective is to elevate the College to new heights of scholarly and research distinction.

The requested resources are aimed at fulfilling two core objectives that align with our vision of transformative impact and integrated excellence:

1. **Accelerate Innovation and Economic Development in North Florida through Multidisciplinary Research and Advanced Graduate Education:** The College plans to harness the multidisciplinary research ecosystem of the Innovation Park to develop pioneering technologies that fuel economic growth, fuel collaborations, and address complex global challenges. By creating a thriving environment that promotes innovation, this initiative will drive significant economic impact in the region through job creation and diversification, industry development, and increased competitiveness.
2. **Foster a New Model of Human-Centric Engineering Education Integrated with HBCU Traditions to Develop a Future-Ready Workforce:** The College's strategy, articulated in the "One College" initiative of its Strategic Plan, aims to seamlessly integrate the foundational values and principles of its parent universities. This approach is designed to pioneer a new model for engineering education that equips students with the essential skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the modern technical workforce while embedding the human-centric values of the nation's leading public HBCU. Rooted in FAMU's ethos of "Excellence with Caring," the College is committed to instilling technical proficiency, empathy, and ethical responsibility in its students. The funding secured through this budget request will support the development of an educational framework that merges cutting-edge, future-ready engineering training with the nurturing essence of HBCU culture, preparing well-rounded, empathetic, and highly skilled engineers ready to contribute to and lead the future technical workforce.

**Key components of the request:**

- **Attracting and Retaining Top Faculty:** To enhance the College's research capabilities and educational quality.
- **Hiring Motivated and Skilled Staff:** To support operational efficiency and contribute to institutional success.

- **Providing Adequate Student Financial Support:** To enable both graduate and undergraduate students to pursue their studies unimpeded by financial constraints.

**Why it Matters:** The investments in the Joint College of Engineering are urgently needed and essential for the sustained prosperity of both Florida and the nation, for the following reasons:

- **Engineering Drives Economic Impact.** According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, engineering jobs pay an average of \$86,000 per year, significantly exceeding the state average of \$57,000 per year<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, engineers drive innovation, form the backbone of start-ups, and establish powerful corporate partnerships that foster broader economic ecosystems.
- **Workforce Development.** The college produces a highly skilled engineering workforce critical to Florida's technological advancement and economic growth. With a 97% job placement rate within six months of graduation, the College's graduates are highly sought after by employers.
- **Innovation and Research:** The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering serves as a hub for innovation and research, tackling critical state and national engineering challenges that directly benefit Floridians. With an additional investment, the college would fuel groundbreaking research initiatives that not only enhance sectors like healthcare, aerospace, and defense but also address pressing societal challenges, thereby improving the quality of life across communities.
- **Opportunity for Growth.** The current faculty size at the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering presents a remarkable opportunity for growth. With only 104 tenure-track faculty members—less than half the average at the top 50 engineering institutions<sup>2</sup>— strategic investment in faculty can dramatically increase our research output and educational capacity. Top engineering schools report research expenditures of over \$800,000 per faculty member, highlighting the substantial returns possible through focused investment.
- **Establishing a National Precedent.** The success of the Joint College can serve as a national model of effective inter-university partnerships. This success will position the College as a prime destination for talented engineering students from Florida, across the nation, and beyond, enhancing its influence in engineering education and research. By supporting the research and student success goals of the College, there is a unique chance to drive economic growth, benefit Florida's citizens, and establish a national benchmark for cooperative higher education, showcasing the strength of successful inter-university partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://floridajobs.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Source: U.S. News & World Report: <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/engineering>

## **GOAL 1: Accelerating Innovation and Economic Development in North Florida through Multidisciplinary Research and Advanced Graduate Education:**

The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering has cultivated a dynamic and distinctive environment for multidisciplinary research and education. Now comprising six diverse departments, including a new one launched this year, the College fosters innovative collaborations that transcend traditional boundaries. Located in Innovation Park, a bustling 208-acre research and development hub governed by the Leon County Research and Development Authority (LCRDA), the College is surrounded by several world-class engineering research centers. These include the High-Performance Materials Institute (HPMI), Florida Center for Advanced Aero-Propulsion (FCAAP), Center for Advanced Power Systems (CAPS), Resilient Infrastructure and Disaster Response Center (RIDER), Applied Superconductivity Center (ASC), and the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory (MagLab) – the world's preeminent and most powerful magnet lab and the only national laboratory in Florida. The MagLab's advanced research capabilities catalyze groundbreaking discoveries across materials, energy, and life sciences, further contributing to our multidisciplinary approach. The synergies created by this multidisciplinary approach and high-performing research centers enable us to undertake complex initiatives, leading to technological advancements, commercialization, and economic value. The success and expansion of our college serve as a vital catalyst for Florida's economic prosperity, solidifying its position as a hub of higher education and technological innovation.

### **Goal 1.1: Drive real-world impact through pioneering, multidisciplinary research and partnerships.**

**Strategy 1.1.1: Expand faculty to pursue new research programs addressing emerging societal needs and national priorities:** The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering is poised to lead interdisciplinary research and graduate education, leveraging its expertise in high-field magnet technology, superconductivity, cryogenics, aerospace, biomedical engineering, and high-performance materials. With the vision to transform the I-10 corridor into **Florida's Technology Corridor**, the college has identified **seven key research focus areas** aligned with national priorities and the unique needs of Northern Florida. This I-10 corridor, a thriving hub for a diverse range of industries, defense establishments, healthcare centers, and technology hubs, provides a fertile ground for our new cross-disciplinary research initiatives, including:

- **Sustainable Hydrogen Technologies:** We aim to be at the forefront of green hydrogen technology development, addressing the urgent need for sustainable energy solutions and capitalizing on economic opportunities in North Florida. Through collaborations with regional energy leaders (e.g.,



NextEra Energy) and leveraging the expertise of our MagLab, HPMI, and CAPS, we are strategically positioned to innovate in hydrogen production, storage, and utilization. Our vision includes establishing a large-scale hydrogen research facility leveraging our NASA ULI effort for hydrogen-fueled aircraft design and thermal management. We are also conducting research on electric aircraft fueled with hydrogen and working with NASA on AC loss measurements for hydrogen-burning superconducting generators. By building faculty strength, we can lead the sustainable energy revolution, fostering local economic growth and the education of future engineers.

- **Advanced Aero-Propulsion and Hypersonic Flight Technologies:** Building on our established strength in aerospace engineering, we plan to develop cutting-edge research programs in ultra-high-speed flow dynamics and propulsion. This area of study is crucial for national security and the advancement of space travel, which holds great promise for Florida's burgeoning aerospace industry.
- **Disaster Resilience:** To enhance Florida's resilience against natural disasters, we plan to broaden our focus beyond current initiatives such as the Resilient Infrastructure and Disaster Response (RIDER) Center. This expansion will involve developing adaptation technologies and strategies, utilizing predictive modeling and simulations for disaster management, and integrating AI and machine learning in disaster prediction and response. By undertaking these efforts, we aim to create safer and more resilient communities while providing valuable support for policymaking in disaster management.
- **Rare-Earth Extraction Technologies:** Capitalizing on our strength in magnet technologies, we plan to develop novel rare-earth extraction technologies, a crucial area given the importance of rare earth elements in many modern technologies. Our efforts will contribute to creating more sustainable and efficient methods for extracting these essential materials.
- **Cybersecurity Engineering:** We propose a comprehensive cybersecurity engineering program to safeguard critical infrastructures in our digitally interconnected world. Leveraging research capabilities at HPMI and CAPS, the program will focus on hardware and software systems for national security and industrial control. Graduates will be skilled at protecting these infrastructures and responding to cybersecurity threats effectively, enhancing national security.
- **Quantum Science and Engineering:** Leveraging our world-leading expertise in high-field magnet technology and superconductivity, we aim to make significant strides in quantum science and engineering. This rapidly evolving field holds the potential to revolutionize information processing and communication, and we intend to be at the forefront of these advancements.

- **HealthTech:** Aligned with the FAMU Health and FSU Health initiatives, our goal is to address critical healthcare challenges nationwide, including the unique issues of geographical accessibility, socioeconomic disparities, and health risks associated with the Gulf Coast's coastal environment. Through a specialized HealthTech program, in collaboration with renowned institutions along the I10 corridor (e.g., Andrew's Institute in Pensacola, Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, and Mayo Clinic Jacksonville), we aim to develop novel technologies to improve healthcare outcomes. This program will tackle complex issues related to chronic disease management, healthcare equity, optimized care delivery, and the utilization of emerging technologies in the healthcare landscape.

To effectively pursue groundbreaking research and develop new research programs, the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering must significantly expand its faculty size. The average number of tenure-track faculty members at the top 50 engineering schools nationwide is 234, whereas Florida's engineering schools average 152 tenure-track faculty members<sup>3</sup>. At present, the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering has 104 tenure-track faculty members. **The bottom line:** To align with these benchmarks and effectively support our objectives, we need to add at least 50 faculty members.

**Strategy 1.1.2: Enable commercialization of engineering research development by working with entrepreneurship and tech transfer programs at both universities:** A pivotal element of our strategic blueprint at the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering involves stimulating the commercialization of research and fostering closer industry ties. To this end, we propose the establishment of a new Office for Technological Innovation (OTI) and an Industrial Affiliates Program (IAP).

**Office for Technological Innovation (OTI):** The OTI will serve as a dedicated office to foster technological innovation and facilitate the commercialization of our research output. The OTI will provide researchers with comprehensive support, offering essential resources to transform research into marketable products and aid in intellectual property rights acquisition, business plan creation, and market identification. Striving to create a vibrant innovation ecosystem, the OTI will organize innovation challenges, entrepreneurial workshops, and networking sessions within the College. The vision is to amplify the economic impact of research, bolster job creation, stimulate economic development in Florida, and reinforce the College's standing as a leading institution for engineering research and education.

**Industrial Affiliates Program (IAP):** The Industrial Affiliates Program (IAP) will establish strategic partnerships between academia and industry, offering

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<sup>3</sup> Source: U.S. News & World Report: <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/engineering>  
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opportunities for researchers to work on industry-relevant projects and providing students with real-world engineering experience and potential pathways to employment. Through active corporate engagement, the IAP connects with companies interested in sponsoring research, licensing technology, and hiring interns, while affiliates gain early access to cutting-edge research and shape its direction to meet industry needs. Moreover, our industrial partners will have the chance to engage with talented students, creating a valuable talent pipeline for future employees.

**Goal 1.2: Enhance the training and graduation of exceptional engineers with advanced degrees:** Our commitment is strengthened by a focus on increasing the recruitment of domestic graduate students and integrating advanced AI technologies to streamline and enhance our recruitment and support strategies.

**Strategy 1.2.1: Expand fellowship support for doctoral degree completion:** Key to our strategy is the enhancement of doctoral completion through robust fellowship programs, including the Doctoral Summer Fellowship and Final Year Fellowship Program. These initiatives are designed to incentivize completion and foster academic excellence among our doctoral candidates.

**Strategy 1.2.2: Implement an AI-enabled strategic recruitment and communication plan for graduate students:** To significantly enhance our recruitment efforts, we will deploy AI-driven tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our recruitment processes. This strategic plan involves hiring dedicated staff to oversee AI implementations that streamline data analysis and communication. Our recruitment strategy will focus on domestic outreach and building partnerships with top feeder institutions and HBCUs without doctoral programs. AI will also support personalized and timely communication with prospective students, detailing our academic programs, financial aid options, and unique research opportunities. Additionally, a new Graduate Ambassador Program will empower current students to share their experiences and highlight the innovative research conducted here.

**Strategy 1.2.3: Foster graduate student welfare and mental health by offering competitive wages, superior work environments, and mentorship opportunities:** We aim to enhance graduate student welfare, improve mental health services, and cultivate a supportive academic environment. This concerted effort will bolster our pursuit of academic excellence and reaffirm our commitment to caring for our rapidly growing graduate student population.

**Key Performance Metrics for GOAL 1:** We will track several metrics, including program rankings, total grant awards, total research expenditures, research

expenditure per faculty, number of invention disclosures, number of licensed patents, IAP membership, graduate enrollment at FAMU and FSU, graduate students per faculty, degrees awarded, and graduation rate.

**GOAL 2: Foster a new model of human-centric engineering education integrated with HBCU traditions to develop a future-ready workforce:**

We are dedicated to nurturing the next generation of engineering leaders who possess not only technical prowess but also empathy, ethical values, leadership skills, and a global perspective. By synergizing FAMU's ethos of "Excellence with Caring" with the research capabilities of a top-tier university, we will provide a unique and enriching educational experience with access for all. Our goal is to prepare students to make lasting contributions to their communities and the engineering profession and to establish our institution as a model for the nation.

**Goal 2.1: Enhance student education through community engagement and partnerships, integrating human-centric values and HBCU traditions.**

Consistent with the National Academy of Engineering's (NAE) vision for the engineer of 2020 and beyond, as outlined in "The Engineer of 2020: Visions of Engineering in the New Century" and "The Engineer of 2020: Adapting to the New Century," this goal supports our mission to develop a future-ready workforce equipped with technical proficiency, global awareness, and social consciousness. By blending these skills with our unique HBCU culture, we will nurture engineers who are not only technically adept but also deeply aware of their societal roles. To support this vision, we are seeking funding for the following strategies:

**Strategy 2.1.1: Promote a socially conscious engineering education through service-learning projects:** This strategy will enable our students to apply their engineering skills in real-world contexts to address societal challenges, enhancing both their technical and social skills. Engaging with local communities allows students to deepen their understanding of societal issues and to convey their enthusiasm for engineering to a broader audience, including K-12 students. This reciprocal learning environment not only enriches their educational experience but also reinforces our human-centric educational model.

**Strategy 2.1.2: Foster partnerships with industry to create career opportunities for students:** This strategy focuses on building relationships with industry partners to develop internship and employment opportunities, integrating real-world experiences that are essential for a human-centric, future-ready education. These partnerships will help our students transition seamlessly into the workforce, equipped with hands-on experience and industry insights.

**Strategy 2.1.3: Support research and innovation among undergraduate and graduate students:** This strategy enhances our educational model by providing funding and creating a supportive environment for student-led research. It also connects students with mentors in their fields, further supporting their development as future-ready engineers prepared to tackle global challenges.

**Goal 2.2: Enhance student access and success by expanding financial aid and implementing comprehensive success strategies for our students.**

Engineering offers a pathway to social mobility through high-paying jobs, but financial constraints and academic challenges often delay or even prevent students from obtaining their degrees. This is especially evident at FAMU, where a large proportion of low-income and first-generation students are enrolled. As per the 2020-2021 Common Data Set, 57% of FAMU undergraduates receive Pell Grants, significantly more than the SUS average of 37%, and the average annual household income stands at \$46,000. Moreover, 70% of undergraduates rely on need-based financial aid. These financial challenges, combined with academic struggles, can impede timely degree completion. We've made strategic changes to mitigate this issue, including recruiting an Assistant Dean for Advancement to raise scholarship-specific philanthropic donations. We're now focusing on securing funds to further student access and success through the following strategies:

**Strategy 2.1.1: Expand need-based financial support to engineering students:** We seek to expand need-based financial support to both pre-engineering students and students in the engineering program. This support will enable more students to pursue engineering degrees, regardless of their financial situation. By providing financial assistance, we can reduce the financial burden on our students and enable them to focus on their academic success.

**Strategy 2.1.2: Enhance Student Success through Integrated Support and AI Tools:** This initiative aims to support our students' academic and personal success by providing comprehensive services such as academic advising, peer tutoring, career guidance, and personal support. We will also integrate the latest digital platforms and Artificial Intelligence tools to enhance these services. AI will assist in tailoring academic advice based on data-driven insights, personalizing tutoring sessions to adapt to individual learning styles, and predicting career trends to align students with future opportunities. Additionally, AI will help identify students facing challenges early, allowing for timely interventions. By combining traditional support mechanisms with innovative AI technologies, this strategy addresses both financial and academic barriers, empowering our students to thrive in their engineering careers.

**Key Performance Metrics for GOAL 2:** We will track key metrics at FAMU and FSU, including the enrollment rate of first-time in college (FTIC) students, four-year and six-year graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients within the College,

second-year retention rate for undergraduate engineering students from both universities, four-year and six-year graduation rates for these students, student-to-faculty ratio within the College, and annual participation rates of undergraduate students in research projects, service learning projects, and industry internships and co-op programs.

## II. Return on Investment

The additional investments will result in the following ROI:

- **Jobs in Florida:** The College's research is expected to create jobs in the region in high-tech sectors, including aerospace and aviation, energy, materials, additive manufacturing, biomedical and civil engineering. Direct jobs will be created within FAMU and FSU, while indirect jobs will be created in industries that benefit from the research. The economic impact of the College's research can be measured by the increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) of the region.
- **External funding and grants:** The College's research is expected to attract increased external funding from grants and contracts. The total FAMU-administered grant awards for the College are expected to increase from \$20 million to \$30 million in year 5 and by 15% each year thereafter. The total FSU-administered grant awards for the College are expected to increase from \$35 million to \$55 million in year 5 and by 15% each year thereafter. Additionally, by playing a critical role in the newly established InSPIRE Institute in Panama City, the College is expected to secure an additional \$20 million in external funds credited to the engineering faculty annually in the first five years, increasing by 15% each year thereafter.
- **National ranking:** The College's engineering program is expected to rise in national ranking from 93 to 50 in the next five years. This will attract more top students and faculty to the College and will lead to increased research funding and collaboration with industry.
- **More patents:** The College's research is expected to result in an increased number of patents being issued. The number of patents issued is expected to increase from 35 in 2022 to at least 50 per year in five years. This will generate revenue for FAMU and FSU through licensing and will help to protect the College's intellectual property.
- **Graduate enrollment:** Graduate student enrollment is expected to increase from 533 to 1,000 in 5 years (88% growth). This will allow the College to offer more specialized graduate programs and attract more top graduate students.
- **Undergraduate enrollment:** Undergraduate enrollment is expected to increase from 2,506 students to 5,000 students in five years (99% growth). This will allow the College to offer more undergraduate programs and attract more top undergraduate students.

- **More start-ups and commercialization:** By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and supporting startup initiatives within the College, there will be an increase in the creation of new ventures and businesses in North Florida.
- **New business partners coming to Florida:** By enticing companies with substantial research interests in strategic areas such as energy and power, materials, space, biomedical, environmental, robotics, and medical devices, we aim to bolster Florida's business landscape.

### **III. Personnel**

1. \$7.67M to hire 50 new faculty: Allocate funds to recruit 40 Assistant Professors and 10 Associate/Full Professors specializing in Sustainable Hydrogen Technologies, Advanced Aero-Propulsion and Hypersonic Flight Technologies, Disaster Resilience, Rare-Earth Extraction Technologies, Cybersecurity Engineering, Quantum Science and Engineering, and HealthTech. These hires will directly support Goal 1.1 (Strategy 1.1.1) and positively impact Goals 1.2 and 2.2.
2. \$3.07M for research lab startup costs: These funds will be used to establish research labs for the 50 new faculty members.
3. \$195K for faculty retention: This budget includes \$150K for salaries and \$45K for fringe benefits, which are intended to retain faculty who excel in research and teaching.
4. \$1.03M to hire seven new staff members (A&P/USPS): These hires will support operational needs under Goal 1.1 (Strategy 1.1.2), Goal 1.2 (Strategies 1.2.2, 1.2.3), Goal 2.1 (Strategies 2.2.1-2.1.3), and Goal 2.2 (Strategy 2.2.2).
5. \$70.35K for staff retention: Allocate \$50K for salaries and \$20.35K for fringe benefits to retain high-performing staff members.

### **IV. Facilities**

Not Applicable.



**2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request  
Education and General  
Position and Fiscal Summary  
Operating Budget Form II**

**University:** FAMU-FSU College of Engineering  
**Issue Title:** Accelerating Excellence: Fueling  
Research and Student Success in the  
Joint College of Engineering

	<u>RECURRING</u>	<u>NON-RECURRING</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>Positions</u>			
Faculty	50.00	0.00	50.00
Other (A&P/USPS)	7.00	0.00	7.00
	-----	-----	-----
Total	57.00	0.00	57.00
	=====	=====	=====
Salaries and Benefits	\$8,704,145	\$0	\$8,704,145
Other Personal Services	\$0	\$0	\$0
Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operating Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0
Electronic Data Processing	\$0	\$0	\$0
Financial Aid	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
Special Category (Graduate Programs)	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000
<u>Special Category (Research Equipment/Start Up)</u>	<u>\$3,070,833</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$3,070,833</u>
<u>Special Category (Faculty &amp; Staff Retention)</u>	<u>\$265,350</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$265,350</u>
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	-----	-----	-----
Total All Categories	\$13,140,328	\$0	\$13,140,328
	=====	=====	=====