

THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM – TIMELINE

THE BEGINNINGS

1927

St. Petersburg Junior College opens – Florida’s first junior college (private)

1933

In this era, all colleges were under the governance of the K-12 local system school board

Palm Beach Junior College – first **public** 2-year college

1947

St. Petersburg Junior College (converted to public institution)

1948

Chipola Junior College

1948

Pensacola Junior College

1939

Legislature passes law allowing counties to petition for the establishment of public colleges

1949

Florida Association of Public Junior Colleges formed.

1949

Booker T. Washington Jr. College-Pensacola is established as 1st public black junior college in Florida

BIRTH OF A SYSTEM

1955 - State Plan for Public Jr. Colleges by Dr. James Wattenbarger is published. From it, the Florida Legislature creates the “Community College Council” to formulate a long -range plan for establishment and coordination of a statewide system of 28 community/junior colleges and a "equitable" system of junior colleges to serve African American students.

1957 – Under Gov. Collins, the Master Plan for Florida Community College system, based on the Wattenbarger Model, **The Community/Junior College in Florida’s Future**, was implemented.

The model was based on a Junior College being accessible by 99% of population within 50 miles. It also was the beginning of a separate “statutory” existence separate from the K-12 system. However, this did not happen in earnest until the 1967-68 fiscal year when the Legislature approved laws which officially released the colleges from local boards of public instruction and established a locally autonomous District Board of Trustees for each college. Also, the Division of Community Colleges was

established as a separate division within the Florida DOE with **Dr. James Wattenbarger** as the Division Director.

STATEWIDE GROWTH ERA - BY CURRENT COLLEGE NAME

1957

Six colleges are established.

- Gulf Coast State College
- College of Central Florida
- Daytona State College
- State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota
- North Florida College
- St. Johns River State College
- Gibbs Jr. College is established in St. Petersburg for African American students.

1960

Four colleges are established

- Eastern Florida State College
- Broward College
- Miami Dade College
- Indian River State College

1962

Three colleges are established

- Florida SouthWestern State College
- Florida Gateway College
- Lake-Sumter State College

1964

One college is established

- Northwest Florida State College

1965

One college is established

- Polk State College

1966

Five colleges are established

- College of the Florida Keys
- Florida State College at Jacksonville
- Santa Fe College
- Seminole State College of Florida
- South Florida State College

Dr. Wattenbarger announced his resignation as Director of Community/Junior College Division of the Florida Department of Education, and returned to the University of Florida. Dr. Lee G. Henderson was named the new Director.

1967

Two colleges are established

- Valencia College
- Tallahassee Community College
- All African-American 2-year public colleges merged with existing "white" institutions

1968

One college is established

- Hillsborough Community College

Legislature approves measure allowing community colleges to be governed under local boards

1969

Florida Association of Public Junior Colleges (FAPJC) changes name to **Florida Association of Community Colleges (FACC)**

1972

One college is established

- Pasco-Hernando State College

THE MODERN ERA

1979

Dr. Lee Henderson retired and was replaced by **Mr. John Blue** as Interim Director. The Community College Coordinating Board continued to function as the state-wide advisory council for the community college system, however in 1979, the legislature created the Community College Coordinating Board to manage and coordinate the system.

1984

After a national search, former state senator and representative **Clark Maxwell, Jr.** became the Board's first Executive Director and the state's first Executive Director of the Community System.

1994

Dr. Harry Albertson is named Executive Director of the Florida Association of Community Colleges.

1997

In December 1997, Clark Maxwell retired as Executive Director of the FL Community College System and was replaced on an interim basis by his Assistant Executive Director, **David Armstrong.**

1998

The State Board of Community Colleges selected **David Armstrong** to be the next Executive Director of the State Board of Community Colleges.

Constitutional revisions reduced the elected Florida Cabinet to four, from seven, effective January 2003.

2000

Legislature passed HB 2263 (the Florida Education Governance Reorganization Act of 2000) in response to the 1998 Constitutional Amendment. The bill:

- Reorganized the governance structure for all educational delivery systems in the state.
- Created a seven-member State Board of Education appointed by the Governor to oversee K-20.
- The State Board to appoints the Commissioner of Education who then appoints the Chancellors for the K-12 System, the State University System, and the Florida College System

2001

Effective July 1, 2001, SB 1162 abolished the State Board of Community Colleges and the Board of Regents and included language for a process whereby community colleges could seek authority to **offer baccalaureate degrees**.

With dissolution of the SBCC, and the establishment of the Dept. of Education and the Division of FI Colleges as agencies of the Governor's Office, it became clear to the state's 28 community college presidents that they would need to be more proactive in terms of advocacy and the System's legislative agenda.

COP alignment with the FACC - formerly the FLAPJC

The Council of Presidents lost its "home" under the State Board of Community Colleges as a result of the 1998 constitutional revision. The Florida Association of Community was tasked to provide administrative support for the COP in exchange for adequate institutional support for staffing. The FACC would use its individual member dues and other non-dues revenue to provide advocacy and governmental relations services. The FACC created the standing Policy and Advocacy Committee under its umbrella which includes all college presidents and the association Executive Director (ex-officio). The COP and the FACC Board of Directors entered into a formal MOU in 2001 clarifying the relationship between FACC and the COP and revising COP by-laws to **establish a COP Policy and Advocacy** Committee under the umbrella of FACC. The MOU was ratified and extended in 2010 and 2016.

2001

The COP and the FACC then executed a Memorandum of Understanding on July 27, 2001 codified their relationship for the Association and its Executive Director to administer and coordinate the work of the Council of Presidents. A similar administrative support model is implemented in 23 other states. The COP-AFC MOU and relationship was re-affirmed in 2010 and again in 2016.

2004:

Dr. Harry Albertson retired as Executive Director of FACC and was replaced by **Mr. Mike Comins** who served until November 2008.

2005-06

The state's colleges continued to expand, particularly in developing programs to address the state's teacher shortage, and workforce-related baccalaureate degrees.

2007

In June 2007, **David Armstrong** left the position of Chancellor to become president of Broward College. Executive Vice Chancellor **Dr. Judith Bilsky** is appointed to serve as acting Chancellor. Dr. Bilsky served as acting Chancellor for a total of 20 months between 2007-2011, in a unique capacity of sharing

position responsibility with **Dr. Will Holcombe**, President Emeritus of Broward College, who was appointed interim Chancellor in October 2007.

2008

In January 2008, Commissioner Eric Smith named **Dr. Holcombe** as Chancellor, eliminating the “interim” tag. Dr. Holcombe served until October 2011. During his tenure he provided critical, steady oversight of the development of “state colleges”. Additionally, he facilitated the appropriate approval process for the expansion of Bachelor’s degree offerings. He was also a respected liaison between the Colleges, the Legislature and the Governor’s office in navigating the impact of the economic recession in this period.

Mr. Michael Brawer is named CEO and Executive Director of the FACC. His challenge was to focus the Association on its core missions, i.e., serving members and administering the Council of Presidents. He also provides legislative advocacy support on systemwide issues affecting college faculty and professional staff, while expanding membership and improving providing professional development opportunities for individuals throughout the FCS.

2010

The Florida Association of Community Colleges changes its name to the **Association of Florida Colleges** in recognition of colleges expanding their missions to include baccalaureate degrees and changing names by dropping “community”. Currently, only two colleges retaining the word community in their name.

2011

Mr. Randy Hanna, former Chair of the State Board of Community Colleges, was named Chancellor of the Division of Florida Colleges. He remained in that position until 2015. Mr. Hanna led the System through the growth of numerous baccalaureate programs and an increasing emphasis on workforce preparation programs.

2015

In 2015, **Ms. Madeline Pumariega** was appointed as Hanna’s successor and currently served as Chancellor of the Division of Florida Colleges until late 2018. During her tenure the system was dealing with major challenges including budget shortfalls, performance measure goal attainment, governance, and system mission issues.

2019

Ms. Kathy Hebda is named Chancellor by Commissioner Richard Corcoran. Hebda is a long-time Department of Education leader having served as Deputy commissioner under Pam Stewart. She has brought significant policy and data focus to the system to strengthen accountability.

For a historical reference regarding the development of community colleges in America, please use the link below.

<https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1873/Community-Colleges.html>