

House Committee on Workforce
and Technical Skills
February 20, 2001



Analysis of the Extent to Which
Universities Meet the Workforce
Needs of Florida's Skilled
Economy

PEPC Findings

- Identification of university degree programs with occupational outcomes is very difficult.
- Most university graduates (at both the undergraduate and graduate level) are qualified for and seek employment in a variety of occupational areas.
- It is also difficult to estimate the effect of in- and out-migration on the available supply of graduates.

PEPC Findings

- While the State has created a coordinated system to address workforce development needs, coordination in the evaluation of the need for higher education degrees has been lacking.
- High demand lists for occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher have not been developed in recent years.

PEPC Findings

Identifying Workforce Shortages

- Comparison of Total Job Openings Requiring a Bachelor's Degree or Higher to Total Degrees Produced in Florida
 - By this measure, Florida produces an excess of graduates.
- Comparison of Florida's Production of University Level Degrees to the National Average
 - By this measure, Florida is well below the national average.

PEPC Findings

Distribution of Degrees by Discipline

- When analyzed by discipline area (i.e. business, health professions, psychology), Florida also lags the nation in production of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in most disciplines.

PEPC Findings

Specific Degree Needs

- A small sub-set of university programs (mainly those requiring professional licensure or certification) may be tracked to occupational demand data. These occupations are mainly professional in nature (medicine, law) or related to the health field, where higher education training is a requirement for employment in that field.

PEPC Findings

Specific Degree Needs

- Currently identified critical shortages -- and under supply of graduates from teaching, nursing programs, and information technology programs.
- An oversupply of lawyers has already been identified, with 1,348 annual openings compared to annual graduates of approximately 1,700.

PEPC Findings

- *In Access and Degree Production Strategies for Meeting Florida's Critical Workforce Needs*, the Commission recommended that “the Legislature should establish an ad hoc task force, with representatives from the Workforce Estimating Conference, state universities and Florida business and industry, to develop a targeted list of undergraduate, graduate and professional programs from which graduates are expected to enter high-demand occupations that are necessary for Florida's skilled economy.”

Baccalaureate Needs Assessment in Five Selected Counties

PEPC Findings

Commission Activities

- Interviews with business and community leaders
- Statewide survey of employers' needs at various postsecondary levels
- Three public hearings to receive input from the communities involved

PEPC Findings

Employer Needs Assessment Survey

- Overall, Florida employers in the five study counties are satisfied with the supply of employees with bachelor's degrees and other types of postsecondary education (70%). And a large majority (93%) is satisfied with the availability of education and training programs locally.

PEPC Findings

Employer Needs Assessment Survey

- The most difficult-to-fill jobs require a bachelor's degrees in one of five key areas: business management, computer science, education (teacher preparation), engineering and health professions.

PEPC Findings

Employer Needs Assessment Survey

- Statewide, one-half of the surveyed firm had *not* been contacted by any postsecondary institution regarding their employee's educational needs in the last 12 months.
- About 1 in 5 employers had been contacted by a public university, community college, or vocational/technical institution.

PEPC Findings

- The five counties have similar educational and population characteristics to the state as a whole; moreover, the expansion of baccalaureate opportunity should be a matter of statewide concern.
- Baccalaureate opportunities should be expanded in one or more key program areas in each of the study counties.