



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Item: SP: A-1a

Friday, June 27, 2025

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A LEGISLATIVE BUDGET REQUEST (LBR)
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY'S OPPORTUNITY ENGINE: RECRUIT,
RETAIN, RISE**

PROPOSED Board ACTION

The approval of the FY2026-27 Legislative Budget Request to seek funding for Florida Atlantic University's Opportunity Engine: Recruit. Retain. Rise.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Each year, in anticipation of the upcoming state legislative session, State University System (SUS) institutions are required to submit their operational legislative budget requests (LBR) to the Board of Governors (BOG) for review. *Florida Atlantic's Opportunity Engine: Recruit. Retain. Rise.* is classified as a university-unique budget request. As stated in the attached LBR documents, the university is requesting \$46.5 million in recurring and nonrecurring funds to power the Opportunity Engine through three strategic goals – Recruit, Retain, and Rise.

Few institutions across the nation – if any – have had the type of transformational decade that Florida Atlantic University just experienced. With bold support from the State of Florida and its visionary leaders, Florida Atlantic is an engine of opportunity. The university has rapidly increased graduation rates, research expenditures, and reached record highs in student retention, philanthropic giving, and enrollment. These outcomes were realized while expanding access to first-generation students and earning national recognition for institutional transformation.

Under new University leadership and as the institution embarks on its next strategic plan, this proposal also aligns with the Board of Governors' SUS 30 plan and the 2025 FAU Accountability Plan.

The proposal also ensures that Florida Atlantic will have the necessary resources to continue on its remarkable trajectory of ensuring student success, growing enrollments and further expanding its research enterprise.

To sustain this trajectory, Florida Atlantic requests **\$46.5 million** in new state investment. This funding will power the Opportunity Engine through three strategic goals:

1. **Recruit:** Invest in instructional and research faculty to support smart enrollment growth.
2. **Retain:** Establish an innovative total compensation program to address compression and retain top talent.
3. **Rise:** Expand the medical school as the foundation for professional health programs and develop infrastructure to support FAU's new R1 research status.

Since 2019, the Board of Governors has required that an institution's Board of Trustees must approve the university-unique LBRs and subsequently submit them to the BOG by a specified date. This year, the BOG has provided guidance that asks university boards to ensure that LBRs are board approved and submitted prior to July 31, 2025.

Implementation Plan/Date

Upon approval by the Board, the Provost's office will submit the attached LBR documentation and inform BOG staff that the Florida Atlantic Board of Trustees has reviewed and supports the request.

Fiscal Implications

See attached LBR for proposed budget estimates.

Supporting Documentation: State University System E&G 2026-27 Legislative Budget Request Form I & II (attached)

Presented by: Mr. Ryan Britton, Vice President for Government Relations and Economic Development

Phone: 561-297-2583



**State University System
Education and General
2026-2027 Legislative Budget Request
Form I**

University(s):	Florida Atlantic University (FAU)
Request Title:	Florida Atlantic's Opportunity Engine: Recruit. Retain. Rise.
Date Request Approved by University Board of Trustees:	June 27, 2025
Recurring Funds Requested:	\$39,839,099
Non-Recurring Funds Requested:	\$6,695,080
Total Funds Requested:	\$46,534,179
Please check the request type below:	
Shared Services/System-Wide Request	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unique Request	<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.

With bold support from the State of Florida and its visionary leaders, Florida Atlantic is an engine of opportunity. The university has rapidly increased graduation rates, research expenditures, and reached record highs in student retention, philanthropic giving, and



enrollment. These outcomes were realized while expanding access to first-generation students and earning national recognition for institutional transformation.

Under new University leadership and a new strategic plan, this proposal aligns with the Board of Governors' SUS 30 plan and the 2025 FAU Accountability Plan. These documents emphasized the university's unique strengths—its coastal geography, its location in one of the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan regions, and its commitment to serving as a living laboratory for the future of higher education.

As the Race to Excellence strategic plan sunsets at the end of this year, this proposal serves as a bridge to FAU's next strategic era—ensuring the university continues to grow enrollment, expand student success, and deliver opportunity without losing momentum. To sustain this trajectory, Florida Atlantic requests **\$46.5 million** in new state investment. This funding will power the Opportunity Engine through three strategic goals:

1. **Recruit:** Invest in instructional and research faculty to support smart enrollment growth.
2. **Retain:** Establish an innovative total compensation program to address compression and retain top talent.
3. **Rise:** Expand the medical school as the foundation for professional health programs and develop infrastructure to support FAU's new R1 research status.

Opportunity Engine Priority	Investment Focus	Amount
1. Recruit	A. Invest in Nationally Competitive Faculty for Enrollment Growth	\$17,436,250 Recurring
	B. Develop Infrastructure to Support Faculty & Students	\$6,695,080 Non-recurring
2. Retain	Address Compression for Existing Faculty & Staff to Support Students	\$11,200,207 Recurring
3. Rise	Expand Medical School to Meet State Healthcare and Economic Needs	\$11,202,642 Recurring
Recurring		\$39,839,099
Nonrecurring		\$6,695,080
Total Request		\$46,534,179



1. RECRUIT

A. Invest in Nationally Competitive Faculty for Smart Enrollment Growth \$17,436,250 recurring

Florida Atlantic University and the State of Florida now have a shared opportunity to build on a decade of success by investing in the instructors and researchers of the future—further transforming the university into a testbed for creative and effective teaching methods. This plan proposes the addition of 145 new full-time faculty lines (both world-class researchers and instructors) at competitive salaries (average \$92,500 base plus fringe). These faculty will primarily support STEM disciplines, including Engineering, Health, and Data Analytics, which represent a significant portion of FAU's undergraduate and graduate enrollment. Approximately 40% of the request will also support general education areas, including Mathematics and Natural Sciences, to ensure a comprehensive academic experience.

These investments will enable smart, strategic enrollment growth as outlined in the 2025 FAU Accountability Plan. Importantly, this means FAU can focus on sustainable revenue streams such as sophomore/junior retention, state college transfers, and re-engagement of stop-outs as outlined in its BOG-approved enrollment strategy. As a result, the University will accelerate projected undergraduate headcount growth by over 5,000 students in five years.

Specific Examples:

- Launch strategic faculty cluster in AI, mental health, and forensic investigations to expand research and graduate enrollment
- Hire tenure-line faculty in environmental and ocean sustainability to grow STEM degrees and support the new Office of the Ocean Economy
- Add interdisciplinary faculty in neuroscience and biomedicine to support R1 research and undergraduate research excellence

B. Develop Infrastructure to Support Faculty & Students \$6,695,080 non-recurring

To support its role as a national top-tier research university that has the faculty resources available to support the most competitive students, FAU proposes a one-time investment in research infrastructure that will enhance faculty recruitment, expand research capacity, and support interdisciplinary collaboration. To accomplish this task, FAU will modernize research facilities and teaching labs to address deferred maintenance and support shared equipment across departments

2. RETAIN

Address Compression for Existing Faculty & Staff to Support Students \$11,200,207 recurring



To remain competitive in a high-cost region, FAU proposes an innovative compensation program to address salary compression and support employee retention.

Key components include:

- A salary adjustment pool to ensure pay is based on external benchmarking
- A merit-based model for sustained performance rewards
- A total rewards framework to enhance wellness, tuition benefits, and workplace satisfaction

This investment initiates resolution for a much bigger issue of a \$44.8M funding gap compared to SUS peers and supports the university's ability to retain the faculty and staff who directly impact student success.

These funds could address longstanding salary compression and inequities to retain junior faculty and staff in a high-cost region. It also begins to close salary gaps to retain faculty in the College of Medicine, where current pay is \$3.9M below AAMC benchmarks.

3. RISE

Expand Medical School to Meet State Healthcare and Economic Needs
\$11,202,642 recurring

FAU's Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine proposes to expand its class size and faculty to meet Florida's growing healthcare workforce needs.

This includes \$11.2M recurring for 52.29 new faculty FTEs (70% Assistant, 30% Associate Professors), continued integration of AI, data science, and precision medicine into the curriculum, and expansion from 272 to 392 medical students by FY 2029–30.

These investments will train physicians in interprofessional, data-driven care, address statewide shortages in primary care and specialty fields, and double the number of new doctors staying in Florida communities after graduation.

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.*

Impact Benchmarks (2028–29):

- Reduce student-faculty ratio from 23:1 to 19:1.
- Increase full-time faculty percentage from 85% to 90%.
- Grow research expenditures from target of \$112M to \$125M.



- Improve academic progress rate (retention) from target of 86.5% to 90%.
- Increase 4-year graduation rate from target of 55.6% to 60%.
- Raise 6-year Pell graduation rate from target of 66% to 70%.
- Raise post-graduation employed/enrolled metric from target of 75% to 80%.
- Produce an additional 392 MD trainees in our communities.

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.*

University-wide: 145 new faculty FTEs will be hired, with 70% at the Assistant Professor rank, 20% Associate, and 10% Full Professor. Approximately 60% of these hires will support high-demand STEM and health science disciplines, while 40% will strengthen general education instruction in areas such as mathematics, composition, and civics—ensuring all students benefit from foundational, high-quality teaching.

Medicine: 52.29 new faculty FTEs will be added to support medical school expansion, with 70% at the Assistant Professor level and 30% at the Associate level. These hires will enable growth in class size, integration of AI and precision medicine, and continued delivery of a nationally competitive, team-based curriculum.

IV. Facilities

(If this issue requires an expansion or construction of a facility, please complete the following table):

Facility Project Title	Fiscal Year	Amount Requested	Priority Number
Health Sciences Training and Research Facility	26-27	\$80,921,250	1

2026-2027 Legislative Budget Request
Education and General
Position and Fiscal Summary
Operating Budget Form II
(to be completed for each issue)

University: Florida Atlantic University (FAU)

Issue Title: Florida Atlantic's Opportunity Engine: Recruit. Retain. Rise.

	Recurring	Non-Recurring	Total
Positions			
Faculty	197.29	0.00	197.29
Other (A&P/USPS)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	197.29	0.00	197.29
Salaries and Benefits	\$39,839,099.00	\$0.00	\$39,839,099.00
Other Personal Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Expenses	\$0.00	\$6,695,080.00	\$6,695,080.00
Operating Capital Outlay	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Electronic Data Processing	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Financial Aid	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Special Category (Specific)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grand Total	\$39,839,099.00	\$6,695,080.00	\$46,534,179.00