

WHAT FLORIDA STUDENTS THINK

Florida Leader's Annual Statewide Opinion Survey

In this third annual "What Florida Students Think" feature article, campus leaders around the state offer up dozens of solutions to their toughest problems, share their secrets for getting people involved, and let us read their applause meter when it comes to life in the Sunshine State. So, read it left to right, back to front, or just zone in on the biggest

problem you're dealing with—we even created pages especially about Student Government officers, Greek leaders, and resident assistants.

If you're still stumped on how to solve a pressing campus dilemma, visit *Florida Leader's* web site for even more ideas in the expanded version of this article at www.floridaleader.com.

To Serve or Not To Serve

Should community service be mandatory for Florida students?

YOU BETCHA!

■ "Students gain self-worth and should give back to the communities that have given them so much."

—Katherine McIntosh, editor in chief, *Literaria*, Eckerd College



McIntosh

■ "Students need to be more involved in community service programs both off and on campus to experience the 'real world' and to perhaps help them decide on a career based on the needs of themselves and others."

—Elizabeth Gauvin, member, *Human Services Club*, Pasco-Hernando Community College, West Campus

NO WAY!

■ "I don't think it should be mandatory, but definitely encouraged more. If it's mandatory, students may be apathetic in their work."

—Lori Eisenberg, member, *Theater of the Community*, New College of the University of South Florida



Eisenberg

■ "It would be difficult for returning students like myself who have to juggle jobs, family, and school."

—Terry Gay, student assistant, Gulf Coast Community College

the activity is. "When you do things in public places, even those who may not have made a conscious decision to attend an event might stay," she says. "The important part is not getting disheartened if a crowd doesn't show up." Thompson also recommends talking with students early in their college career. "We target freshmen and try to 'wow' them so they will want to be involved."

At the University of Florida, the key to recruiting members for the Hispanic Student Association is heavy promotion. HSA advertises in the *Alligator* newspaper, staffs an information table, and posts flyers around campus. Director of Programming Mayte Canino says the club's efforts bring in anywhere from 200 to 250 students each meeting. "We don't just sit people down and have them listen to officers speak," Canino says. "We have themes, like our Spring Break Bash, where we play games and everyone participates."

Across the state, word of mouth remains one of the best publicity strategies, according to Judy Drake of the University of Tampa. As head coordinator for the PEACE Volunteer Center, she helped record more than 23,000 student volunteer hours last year. "When we had our first alternative Spring Break, every student came back with a positive experience," she says. "They shared stories with others who got interested in volunteering because of their friends."

Child Care

Campus leaders seeking to help students meet childcare needs should consider conducting a costs and benefits analysis that weighs the college's liability, costs, and insurance before tackling this complex issue. If the demand is not great enough to justify building a facility, then try scholarships, vouchers, a part-time service, or a sitter exchange.

At Pasco-Hernando Community College, Mary Miller helped survey 600 students and learned that the biggest problem with establishing an on-campus daycare was the location. "While there's a demand for child care, it's just not sufficient to start a center at any one campus location," says Miller, co-coordinator of PHCC Cares, a community-service organization.

Colleges with existing childcare centers can enhance their programs by creating educational goals or offering financial aid to parents. At Daytona Beach Community College, students, faculty, and local parents can enroll kids in a learning program at the Child Development Lab School. Scholarships are available to help students afford the \$75 to \$100 weekly enrollment fee, says Janet Constant, senior staff assistant.

Thanks to a 1970s law passed by the state legislature, Florida State University's center gets funding from the Capital

Improvement Trust Fund generated by students' tuition. "We provide care, as well as a good early education," says Ann Levy, director of FSU's Educational Research Center for Child Development. Students have first priority for use of the center, which charges \$65 to \$140 weekly. "Every college campus does things differently, but now all 10 state universities have childcare centers," Levy says.

The National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers advocates for a childcare center at every college and university in the nation. For more information about starting a center on your campus, visit the NCCCC web site at erics.ed.uiuc.edu/n4c/n4chome.html.

Alcohol Abuse

"A lot of people drink—some are just really into it because it's college," says Rua Gordon, a Habitat for Humanity volunteer

What will most improve life in Florida in the future?

■ "The reduction of violence and substance abuse, and a group of young leaders with great minds and hearts willing to help and take on new challenges."
—Scarlet Parnell, student ambassador, Lake City Community College

■ "Stressing to the younger generation to stay in school, and improving our educational system to not let as many slip through the cracks."
—Michael Losito, member, Phi Theta Kappa, Central Florida Community College

■ "Preservation of Florida's natural beauty."
—Judy Drake, head coordinator, PEACE Volunteer Center, University of Tampa

at Northwood University in West Palm Beach. With only about 1,000 students enrolled at the private school, a security guard can detain all intoxicated students and prevent them from leaving campus. "I'm the designated driver for anyone who has been drinking," Gordon says. "I encourage others to do the same."

The University of North Florida combats alcohol abuse with technology. At the Campus Alcohol and Drug Information Center, students can take Alcohol 101, a free, computer-based alcohol-education course. Using the virtual-reality software program, students become characters at a party and are confronted with scenarios such as having sex or driving under the influence. "The program lets students see the consequences of their decisions," says Kevin Modglin, health educator and director of student health services. "Alcohol 101 is a small but important part of our campaign of social norming, which focuses on the majority of students who don't binge drink."

The Bush-Brogan Report Card

C-	"Gov. Bush surprised everyone by vetoing a five percent state tuition increase. This was a great victory, but he also vetoed the I-95 corridor project that would have brought different research projects to FAU and other universities." — <i>Christian Momm, Boca Raton SGA vice president, Florida Atlantic University</i>
F	"The voucher program is a disaster. You should be giving the school more attention and finding out what the problems are instead of sending the students someplace else. I also have a problem with the separation of church and state, and now, federal dollars are going to go to parochial schools." — <i>Sherry Ortiz, SGA president, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University</i>
A	"Gov. Bush took the time to meet with me and three other Florida student leaders and talk to us one-on-one over lunch. I think anybody who is that busy and is willing to take time out for a student deserves everything we can give him." — <i>Chris Massey, 98-99 SGA president, Pensacola Jr. College</i>
C	"I like what he is doing with crime prevention, but I disagree with the voucher program and educational programs and cutbacks." — <i>Christopher Finney, SG legislative liaison, St. Petersburg Junior College</i>
A+	"These gentlemen have proven that they're behind students all the way!!" — <i>Richard Viens, SGA director of spirit and entertainment, Florida Atlantic University</i>
D-	"They seem to encourage maintaining the white male status quo. Bush refuses to say the word 'gay' or 'homosexual.' Everyone is a 'non-heterosexual,' which seems to relegate us to the status of non-persons." — <i>Michael Tipton, 1997 SG senator, Florida State University</i>

Student Apathy

No matter if the school is large or small or public or private, the number one problem that frustrates SG leaders still is apathy. And the growing populations of commuter and nontraditional students seem to compound the problem. "There's no simple remedy," says SGC Senate President Avia Rice, who attends the largely commuter North Campus of Florida International University. Rice says FIU's Student Programming Council sponsors multicultural events, lectures, and comedy shows that have drawn as many as 400 students. "We take into consideration that our average student is between 26 and 28 years old," Rice says. For instance, working students enjoy weekly evening entertainment from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Blue Moon Café, which serves up food, dance lessons, and open-mike poetry.

Because returning students typically work, have families, and take classes, planning low-cost, kid-friendly events may encourage their involvement. At Florida Atlantic University, SGA leaders hope the recent addition of a Nontraditional Programs Chair will help them plan events that appeal to all students. "A third of our students are nontraditional," says Richard Viens, director of spirit and entertainment. "We hope to implement

picnics and family haunted houses and try to get some of our events geared toward nontraditional students, so they can feel the spirit of FAU, too."

Hillsborough Community College student leaders are giving students what they want by planning events based on feedback from 300 surveys. "Each month, we're trying to do things in the coffee house," says Emily Maddux, SG secretary. HCC kicked off the year with performances by alternative and Irish folk singers. "In October, we'll have a Hispanic festival with mariachi bands and flamenco dancers."

Innovative advertising and more events such as concerts and barbecues get students involved at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, according to SGA President Sherry Ortiz. "For the Jam Slam Student Shag Fest, we have live music and a ska band coming," she says. "We got Trojan to donate 3,000 condoms for games. We've also gotten a lot of free things like airplane-shaped stress balls, and we bought SGA lanyards." Ortiz says having a diverse e-board also helps get different campus groups involved. "Our VP is an RA, so she's always talking to residents. Our chief justice is in the Greek system. Also, we have a new treasurer, and he's involved in the Caribbean Student Association."

Campus Security

As students take an active role to keep their campuses crime-free with late-night patrols and escorts, other decision-makers are reevaluating the security services their tuition dollars already buy. "Crime is pretty much nonexistent on our campus," says Christopher Finney, 98-99 legislative liaison at St. Petersburg Junior College-Clearwater campus. SG conducted a survey to find out what students thought of campus patrols. "They wished it was more visible, and students said they're never there when they needed them," Finney says. "We were

concerned about that, especially when we had other programs that could use funding."

For more information about campus security measures and college crime statistics, visit campussafety.org.

Parking Problems

When Pensacola Junior College students complained to SGA about a lack of parking, student leaders took the issue directly to administrators with a solution. "Now that the campus is growing, so is the need for parking," says Chris Massey, 98-99 SGA president. "We were talking about developing a nearby field to create about 100 spaces."

At Edison Community College, commuters have never been charged a parking fee. Last year, the college even forgave most old citations. "When you register, they give you a decal," says Karina Khan, SGA president. "And each club president gets their own space."

University of Florida students can flash their student IDs for a free ride on city buses, says Brent Gordon, SG president. SG allocated funds to alleviate parking problems and encourage students to catch the bus outside their apartments. Last fall, buses gave more than 1 million rides to Gators, according to Gerald Fleming, RTS transit supervisor.

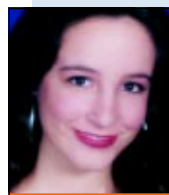
Student Retention

While ensuring student success might seem like the administration's problem, SGA leaders at Florida Atlantic University are making retention a student issue. "We just had a student summit about it, and a lot of the complaints were about a lack of campus life," says Boca Raton Vice President Christian Momm. The purpose of the summit, he says, was to find out "why we have so many students leaving after their freshman year and why they're transferring to other schools. A lot of students complained about getting the runaround from some of the administration as far as getting things done such as tuition. But the main reason we came up with for them transferring was they almost consider it a community college."

Officer Politics

What's the biggest challenge when it comes to working with other members or officers?

■ "Listening. A leader must accept constructive criticism and input from others in order to be a team player."
—*Gwendolyn Corso, SGA president, Valencia CC-East*



Corso

■ "If they aren't compensated at least a little, it's hard to get students to put in the hours and 100 percent."
—*David "Tex" Saunders, SGA student relations chair, University of West Florida*

■ "Leadership styles often vary among officers. It's essential that good leaders understand that there are different styles and how the styles can work together for an end goal."
—*Sonia Borrell, SG exec. secretary, University of Miami*



Saunders

■ "Communication. Making sure that I understand their goals and motivation and that they understand mine."
—*Darren Springer, SGA director of academics, Florida Atlantic University*

What Are Leaders Made Of?

What's the most important leadership quality?

- "Perseverance."
- "...the ability to motivate others..."
- "Honesty, integrity, and morals."
- "Commitment. They have to be willing to sacrifice..."
- "Empathy."
- "The ability to make more leaders. You have to replace yourself."

Ignorance Isn't Bliss

Describe the most effective peer-education program or awareness campaign you've produced for residents.

■ "The Matthew Shepard Vigil raised awareness of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. It also showed how important it is to include sexual orientation in the non-discrimination clause in the State University System." —Kamala Kiem, Florida International University kckkiem@aol.com

■ "The Office of Residential Life and Student Services is responsible for the university's Alcohol Education Program. In recent years, the university's TV station and radio station have spent added time communicating the facts of alcohol and alcohol abuse." —Jesus Aviles, Jr., Barry University javiles2@cwix.com

■ "'Seasons Greetings.' An opportunity for a group of RAs to educate about the different holiday seasons celebrated in December and January. Students of different cultures shared their customs with students of other cultures." —Wilbern Simpson, Stetson University

■ "Victim's Advocate Program did a program called 'I'm Stalking You.' It informed the residents about rape, sexual battery, assault, and stalkers." —Trenika Philyor, Florida State University

RA: Friend Or Foe?

Some may think a resident advisor only decorates bulletin boards and monitors music volume in the hall. However, this 24-hour position requires RAs to balance the sometimes conflicting roles of being a dorm patrol and a confidante for residents. Terry Weech of Nova Southeastern University was faced with a tough decision when he visited a resident and friend who was violating the "no candle" policy. Fortunately, NSU prepares RAs with resident relationship training. To treat students fairly and consistently, Weech suggests telling residents when they arrive on campus that RAs will enforce rules regardless of friendships and will report infractions to a resident life higher-up. "When residents are dealing with a sensitive situation, give them a pat on the back, and make sure there are social

programs to form connectedness," Weech says. NSU's RAs also meet weekly to give each other support and discuss which programs are effective.

Cafeteria Food

At Northwood University, required meal plans and the lack of campus food options are serious issues. "The biggest problem is the quality of our cafeteria food," says Wilson Enriquez. "With the exception of a few items on the menu, the food selection is horrible."

Colleges that alternate between mystery meat and shepherd's pie may want to take a few pointers from the University of Central Florida. UCF provides students with 13 eating venues that range from cafeteria style to Pizza Hut. Also changing the face of campus dining is the University of Miami.

This year, the Hurricanes welcome the Café Ortega nacho bar and rotisserie chicken. Tejal Patel, UM's dining services marketing manager, says students should form a Dining Services Advisory Board. "The board is very helpful, because it allows students to share concerns and solutions," Patel says. UM also uses comment cards and personal meal plans for nontraditional students with lunch-only options.

Cramped Co-Eds

"Overcrowded resident halls is of major concern," says Jesus Aviles, Jr. of Barry University. "As the university expands, so does the number of students. More students are being accepted for university housing as never before seen. As a member of the housing department, special training is being administered to better equip staff for possible concerns."

This fall, University of Florida students were housed briefly in dorm lounges, according to Jonathan Zerulik, UF's Inter-Residence Hall Association business manager. Although UF plans to open new facilities in fall 2000, for now, extra residents are assigned to temporary triples. "Some students make the best of the situation by building a 'second-story loft'—a wide shelf around the room, which they furnish with sofas, televisions, and more," Zerulik says.

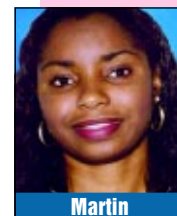
In Miami, Florida International University students and staff are successfully handling overcrowding. FIU got funding for a \$7.8 million facility with 500 beds for North Campus students by bringing its housing needs to the attention of the Board of Regents. "You're not telling administrators something they don't already know," says Larry Lunsford, associate dean of student life. "So make sure you have ideas on successful solutions." If obstacles such as land shortage confront a school, Lunsford suggests researching these alternatives: have residence life buy and manage a nearby apartment complex, rent floors from a local hotel, or build on land in the community. FIU's Resident Students Task Force includes students and key administrators from all campus offices. Lunsford says the task force is successful because they proactively address matters that will affect residential life in two years.

Cooperating with another school created a win-win situation for Palm Beach Community College, according to James Brock, student housing director. After losing \$2.7 million in six years on Panther Park, a college-owned student apartment complex, PBCC made a \$300,000 deal with nearby Palm Beach Atlantic College to rent out Panther Park's vacant rooms. With an enrollment increase from 1,600 to 2,100 in eight years, Palm Beach Atlantic outgrew its on-campus living facilities, according to Buck James, dean of enrollment services. The college plans to lease 134 of Panther Park's 640 rooms, helping PBCC get out of the red. Palm Beach Atlantic will provide transportation for residents to its campus eight miles away.

Inspirational Boot Camp

What's the best way you've found to motivate others and fight apathy?

■ **Make residents feel important.**
"Encourage them. It's nice to give hugs and praise to someone for the good work they are doing."
—Michelle Martin
Florida International University
mmartin@hotmail.com



Martin

■ **Use incentives and rewards.**
"When we have campus events that involve sports or competitions, I remind them that they can win shirts that indicate that they have won that tournament, and then kind of get their adrenaline going by reminding them that they can be known as the best at Northwood!"
—Wilson Enriquez, Northwood University
mirta@aol.com

■ **Practice what you preach.**
"Through example. Often, showing my own enthusiasm energizes and inspires others. If not, I try explaining the benefits of an idea."
—Gerard Grauballe
Florida Institute of Technology
grauball@fit.edu

At the Univ. of Florida, Courtney Nicholson (top) and Emily Taylor maximize space in their Jennings Hall room with a "second-story loft," creating a "downstairs" living room and "upstairs" sleeping quarters.





Sigma Sigma Sigma sisters, led by President Julie Ann Miller (left), clean up a stretch of beach near Sarasota. The 15-member sorority at Ringling School of Art and Design volunteers twice monthly.

A Bad Rap?

Fraternity members often are portrayed as beer-guzzling neanderthals who throw toga parties and crush cans on their heads. Sorority girls are depicted as anorexic, blond bimbos who parade around in skimpy outfits, while getting plastered on punch at frat parties. As Greeks try to revamp their image through philanthropy and awareness campaigns, the scrutiny of the few who perpetuate these myths continues to threaten the entire system's existence.

To shake their negative image, Greeks partner with national charities such as the Red Cross and March of Dimes to show their dedication to giving back to the college and community. "Sororities and fraternities are about so much more than just partying," says Amy Bellin, vice president of chapter life for Alpha Xi Delta sorority at the University of Florida. "We're the ones that are cleaning the highways, volunteering at nursing homes, and raising money for the terminally-ill children."

Alcohol Abuse

As the media continues to bash Greeks for a handful of alcohol-related incidents, non-Greeks who overconsume in bars, dorms, and apartments are seldom mentioned. "You'll see on the news, 'Greeks caught drinking,' but you never hear that a chapter raised money for charity," says Ashley Burns, vice president of programming for Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity at the University of Central Florida. "It's the *Animal House* image—we get the

stereotype of being rich drunk kids with nothing better to do, but as far as the kids off campus who aren't Greek, I've seen a lot worse out of them."

Veteran Greek leaders at UCF introduce recruits to responsible alcohol consumption. "We try to get each fraternity to have their new pledge classes come to meetings and put on workshops—not to preach to them, 'Don't drink,' but more importantly that you can drink and still be responsible," Burns says. At UCF parties, IFC members patrol for infractions such as underage drinking or alcohol-related accidents, and chapters are required to have at least three UCF police officers on-site. Groups that violate the rules can be fined from \$50 to \$3,000 or required to do mandatory service.

To decrease chapter liability and prove they can have fun without alcohol, many fraternities have opted to go dry or join peer-education groups such as GAMMA—Greeks Advocating the Mature Management of Alcohol. "We had a recovering alcoholic discuss negative results of alcohol abuse," says Sarah Scott, activities chair of Alpha Chi Omega at Florida Southern College. "It had a really strong impact."

Halting Hazing

The existence and continued relevance of organizations such as StopHazing.org and the Committee to Halt Useless College Killings (CHUCK) is a reminder that hazing can still cross the line from fun camaraderie to dangerous or even fatal coercion. CHUCK is led by Eileen Stevens, whose son Chuck Stenzel was locked in a car trunk in 1978 by frat brothers and told to drink a pint of Jack Daniels, a six-pack, and a variety of wines. Stenzel died at age 20 of pulmonary edema—he drowned as his lungs filled with fluid. Since her son's death, Stevens has spoken out against hazing at about 40 campuses and conventions each year. "Since many states

have made it a crime, some of the hard-core hazing has softened," Stevens says. "But sadly, much of it has gone underground and remains in secrecy." Stevens says national Greek organizations are making strides in the right direction, however, by creating policies and educational projects.

Greek Domination of Campus Leadership

Fact or fiction? Most influential student leadership roles are held by Greeks. "It's much easier to get involved when you're Greek, because you're a part of a large unified organization," said Andrea Weems, assistant rush chair for Phi Mu sorority at Florida State University. "My sorority has a delegate that brings us applications for every campus organization and event. We also post fliers around the house and make announcements at dinner."

Involvement has more to do with the individual than a specific group, says Tiffany Pokabla of the University of Florida. "I didn't pledge until my sophomore year," says Pokabla, Phi Mu pride leader and assistant philanthropy chair. "In my freshman year, I got involved on my own. If you are a strong leader and can prove yourself, a non-Greek member can achieve the same success as any Greek member."

In instances where fraternity and sorority members have infiltrated campus groups, Greeks themselves have taken action. "Sometimes it does seem like the same people are holding the same leadership roles," says Valerie Brennan, Panhellenic president at the University of Central Florida. "That's why we're doing Students For a Better Student Government, which was started by a former Greek to encourage more involvement from everyone—Greek and non-Greek." 🦋

Motiv-Eta Greek

How do you motivate others?

■ "Offer a break in dues to members that actively participate. It's always better to reward than punish."

—Jared M. Ross, president emeritus
Phi Delta Theta fraternity
Florida State University

■ "Seek them out individually, give them a job or task and make it seem like it's the most important job in the organization."

—Robb Tessmer
parliamentarian
Kappa Sigma
fraternity

University of Central Florida



Tessmer

■ "Enthusiasm is the best motivation! You have to have a very positive attitude, and it will become contagious."

—Julie Ann Miller, president
Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority
Ringling School of Art & Design

What's the best part of leading?

■ "Knowing about everything going on and meeting new people."

—Nikki Elston,
corresponding
secretary, Alpha
Delta Pi sorority
University of West
Florida



Elston

■ "Representing the student's voice."

—Ewans Michel, Chapter Development
chair, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity
Florida State University

■ "Having others come to me for advice."

—Sarah Scott, activities chairman
Alpha Chi Omega sorority
Florida Southern College

It's Greek To Them!

- **Greek Zone** www.greekzone.com
- **Greek Pages** www.greekpages.com
- **Greek Spot** www.greekspot.com
- **GreekNet** www.greeknet.net
- **GAMMA** www.bacchusgamma.org