

Staffing Levels at Florida Gulf Coast University

An Historical and Comparative Analysis

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Staff Advisory Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An analysis of staffing level data taken from the Board of Trustees Information System (BOTIS) report demonstrates that the growth rate of the number of students and the number of full-time faculty markedly exceeds the growth in the number of A&P and SP staff. A comparison between FGCU and two comparable state university schools (University of North Florida and University of West Florida) showing growth of Student FTE in relation to number of staff demonstrates much higher FGCU Student FTE growth as compared to number of staff positions. In addition, the ratio of student FTE to staff at FGCU is 12 to 1 at FGCU, vs. 8 to 1 and 9 to 1 respectively for UNF and UWF.

INTRODUCTION

The staff of Florida Gulf Coast University are concerned that the current level of staffing relative to the increase in the number of faculty and students is on a trajectory which may adversely affect the successful pursuit of the university's strategic goals and fulfillment of its mission. To quote the FGCU 2010-2011 State University System Annual Accountability Report "FGCU continues to exhibit the fastest growth rate in the State University System (SUS) and is only about half-way through its projected growth curve." In addition "the number of undergraduate programs has quadrupled to over 50 programs currently and the number of graduate degree programs has roughly tripled to well over 30 programs."

The university has also grown physically. Parking Garage B, Parking Garage 4, the Cohen Center expansion, Marieb Hall, Palmetto and Osprey residence Halls in South Village, and West Lake Village are some of the areas added in the last four years that staff support and maintain.

Using data gathered from the Board of Trustees Information System quarterly report, we have created graphs that illustrate the growth relationships over time among the categories of faculty, staff (both A&P and SP) and students. This information illustrates the increasing disparity in numbers between the people who are supported (faculty and students) and those who support them (staff).

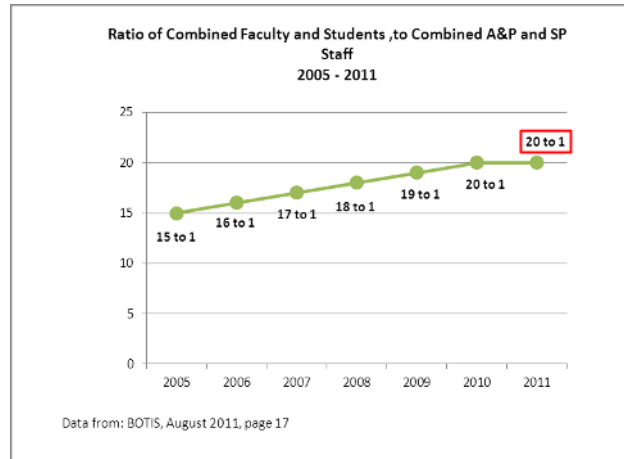
To give context to what is occurring at FGCU, we have tried to find ways to compare our university to comparable sister institutions in the state university system (SUS). We looked at the University of North Florida, and the University of West Florida. These two institutions are the ones most often cited as similar to FGCU and are sometimes used when comparisons like this are desired. The data used were taken from the University of North Florida Pocket Fact Book (<http://www.unf.edu/uploadedFiles/aa/oira/inst-research/Fact%20Book%202009-2010.pdf>), and the University of West Florida Fact Book (<http://upic.uwf.edu/OIR/RelatedFile/main.cfm?CatID=14&Bookmark=No>).

A comparison among the three institutions (FGCU, UNF, UWF) showing numbers of faculty, and A&P and SP/USPS staff over time cannot be made due to the inability to assure that the personnel in these three categories are similarly compiled/counted.

FGCU DATA

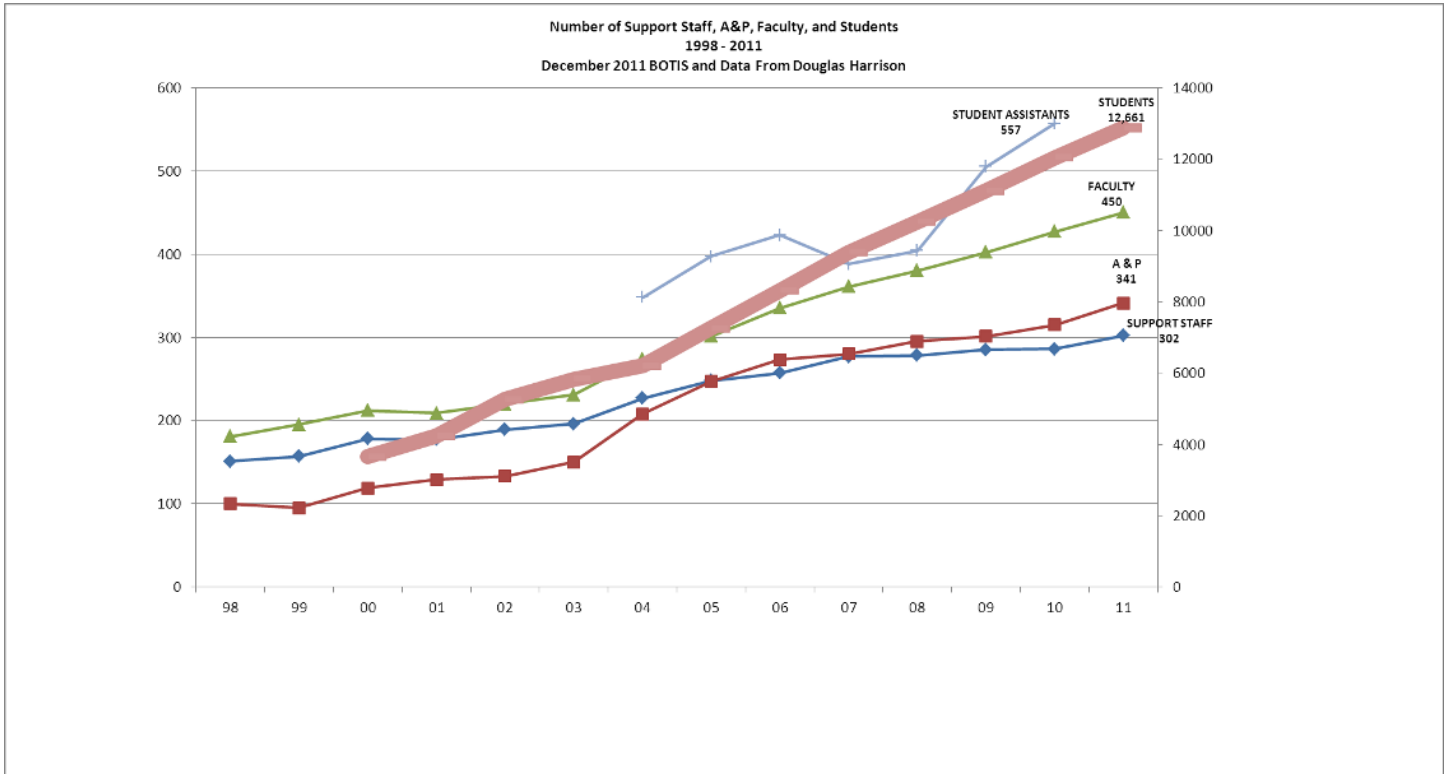
In **Figure 1** below the number of faculty and students (the population supported by the staff at FGCU) were combined and compared to the combined number of A&P and SP staff to show a ratio over time. Since 2005, the ratio has increased by 33%.

Figure 1



There are a few things that can be discerned from **Figure 2**, which shows staffing levels over time for five categories of employees. First, the number of students and faculty have increased at a much higher rate than the number of A&P and SP staff. Second, the use of Student Assistants between 2007 through 2011 increased dramatically, while the number of SP staff remained almost static.

Figure 2



COMPARISON DATA

On the following page **Figures 3 through 5** compare the growth in the number of FTE students relative to the growth in the number of staff over several years. This comparison is shown for FGCU, the University of North Florida and the University of West Florida. The time period covered by the data presented for the other two universities is shorter than FGCU (five years for UNF and six years for UWF as compared to eleven years for FGCU). However, the difference between what is shown on the FGCU graph, and what is shown on the graphs for the other two universities, is startling. UNF and UWF show growth that is roughly parallel between FTE student growth and staff growth over time. FGCU shows growth in the numbers of FTE students that increased steadily over time, while the growth in the number of staff barely grew over the eleven year period.

Corresponding ratios of FTE students to staff (using data for the latest years available for each institution) show that currently FGCU’s ratio is 12 to 1, while the ratios for UNF and UWF are 8 to 1 and 9 to 1 respectively.

Figure 3

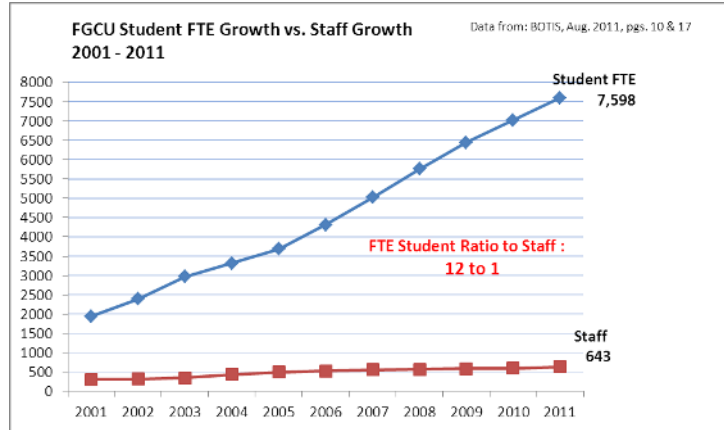


Figure 4

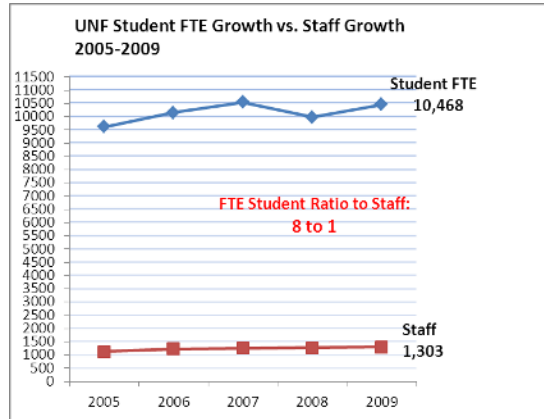
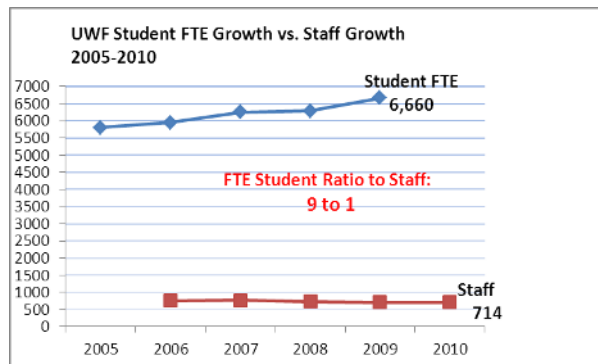


Figure 5



CONCLUSION

As the university continues to grow and increase the number of programs and courses offered, grants obtained, adjuncts and full-time faculty hired, physical buildings and properties owned, and events hosted, staff resources become thinly spread. This has not gone unnoticed by some faculty who sometimes find it difficult to get the support they need.

Current economic realities leave little room for funding the additional recurring expense that hiring more staff would require. However, it may be wise to take a close look at the current staffing situation and begin developing strategies for identifying how to balance staff growth relative to the increasing number of students, faculty, undergraduate and graduate degree programs, physical buildings, and properties owned, that staff supports. To fail to do so now may mean putting at risk the university's ability to fulfill its mission and strategic goals at some point in the future.