

Probable Impacts on Student Enrollment at USF from The Florida Gulf Coast University

by:

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Overview

When the FGCU opens in Fall, 1997, the USF Fort Myers campus will close. This paper analyzes probable impacts of the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) on USF's overall student enrollment and on student enrollment at the USF's Sarasota Campus. Although FGCU may impact USF in several other areas such as Budgets, Facilities, Personnel and Recruitment, most appear relatively minor. (For greater detail, see Micceri & Waugh, 1995.)

The following key points emerge from these analyses:

- The new Florida Gulf Cost University will have a negative effect upon USF's enrollment. USF will lose about 1,000 Annual Student FTE and about 2,000 students to the FGCU.
- Most of the student headcount and FTE losses are likely to arise in 1997 -98, the first year of operation of the FGCU, and not much loss growth is projected over the next several years.
- Losses in revenues due to the current Fort Myers enrollment should be more or less offset by the reduction in expenses when USF no longer has to pay for the Fort Myers campus.
- Because almost all FTE at the Fort Myers Campus falls into resident upper-level undergraduate FTE (80%) or Graduate Classroom FTE, our two "non-profit" FTE categories (Micceri, 1994), it is possible that USF will realize a net profit from the loss of Fort Myers' Student SCH.
- For disciplines where the FGCU will offer full programs while the Sarasota Campus can only manage partial (programs), many South Sarasota County students may be tempted to go to FGCU, impacting student enrollment at USF's Sarasota Campus.

Recommendations

- We should monitor student enrollment at the Sarasota campus and develop specific projections of future enrollment that account for the probable loss of student credit hours (SCH) to FGCU.
- It might prove beneficial to emphasize programs at the Sarasota Campus that are not in FGCU's plans (for example, Rehabilitation Counseling, Economics and Engineering).

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Assumptions: The only factors affecting a student's choice of USF versus the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) are the location and the majors available. Only USF students who took at least half of their courses at the Fort Myers campus were considered to be Fort Myers students. The ratio of lower-level/upper-level students at the FGCU is the same as USF's Tampa Campus and the ratios used in making projections will remain stable over time.

Table 1 and Table 2 Projected Student Headcount and Annual Student FTE Losses of USF to FGCU

Table 1 shows the projected Student Headcount losses to the FGCU in the 1997-98 and 2000-2001 Academic Years¹. USF is likely to lose about 2,000 students to the FGCU. Most of these losses, about 1600 students, will arise when students who would have enrolled at USF-Fort Myers campus in its current form will enroll at the FGCU in 1997 (when USF-Fort Myers will close). Additionally, USF will lose about 400 students from the Fort Myers area to the FGCU because of the wider range of majors offered by the FGCU as compared to USF-Fort Myers. Most of these student losses will arise when the FGCU opens in 1997-1998. However, when the program offerings at the FGCU are expanded in 2000-2001, some more students are likely to choose the FGCU over USF.

Table 2 shows the projected student FTE losses to the FGCU in 1997-1998 and in 2000-2001. USF will lose about 1,000 annual student FTE to the FGCU. Most of these losses, about 700 annual student FTE, will arise when students who would have enrolled for courses at USF-Fort Myers will enroll for courses at the FGCU in 1997. Additionally, about 300 annual student FTE will be lost because of the wider program offerings at the FGCU as compared to USF-Fort Myers. Most of the annual student FTE losses will arise when the FGCU opens in 1997. An important point to note is that the losses in 1997-98 are only projected to grow from 1024 FTE to 1042 FTE by 2000-2001. Thus, most of the FGCU's impact on USF should be felt immediately.

Although several other factors are likely to influence the preference of potential FGCU and USF students, the following two were considered to be the most important reasons why USF might lose students to the FGCU (Waugh, 1994):

- At present, 76% of USF students who claim Fort Myers as their home (i.e., Charlotte, Collier, and Lee counties), attend the Fort Myers Campus of USF. We should therefore expect that when FGCU opens in 1997, most students from that area will choose to attend FGCU rather than one of USF's campuses, if they are able to study the degree program of their choice.
- At present, the USF's Fort Myers campus is strictly limited to upper-level students and only offers a limited number of degree programs. Unlike USF's Fort Myers campus, when the FGCU opens in 1997, it will enroll both lower-level and upper-level students, and will offer a considerably wider range of degree programs. The number of degree programs offered by the FGCU will be further increased in the year 2000-2001.

These projections are likely to be overestimates, representing a worst case scenario. Nevertheless, the worst-case scenario is a good approach for planning purposes.

A limitation to be noted is that these projections do not consider Population Growth trends and the Fort Myers area is the fastest growing region of Florida. Further, the Fort Myers campus has experienced greater proportional growth than any other USF campus over the past few years. Some

¹All projections are based on the Fall, 1993 student enrollment statistics.

of the students from USF's feeder counties such as Hillsborough, Pinellas, Sarasota, Manatee might also choose to enroll at the FGCU to "get away from home."

Finally, almost all students who attend USF's Fort Myers Campus are either upper-level undergraduates (80%), or graduate classroom. The Budget Office's SUS Cost Analysis report, viewed in conjunction with funding per FTE student (State funds and Tuition) indicates that although USF breaks approximately even on resident, upper-level undergraduate FTE, we lose money on Graduate Classroom FTE (Micceri, 1994). Because almost all FTE at the Fort Myers Campus falls into one of these two "non-profit" categories (rather than into our profitable resident categories: lower-level undergraduate and graduate thesis/dissertation), even without considering the other costs associated with faculty travel and the diseconomies of scale associated with smaller branch campuses, it is possible that USF would realize a net profit from the loss of Fort Myers' Student SCH.

Any losses in revenues due to the current Fort Myers enrollment will more or less be offset by the reduction in expenses when USF no longer has to pay for the Fort Myers campus. However, USF's enrollment losses due to FGCU's larger number of majors (compared to Fort Myers) may reduce the enrollment--and revenues--at USF's Sarasota campus without a corresponding reduction in costs.

Table 3
Potential Impact of the FGCU on the USF-Sarasota Campus

It is unlikely that FGCU will influence any USF campuses other than the main campus and the Sarasota campus. Dean David Schenck of the Sarasota Campus suggests that for disciplines where the FGCU will offer full programs while the Sarasota Campus can only manage partial (programs), many South Sarasota County students may be tempted to go to FGCU.

Table 4 shows a list of planned full programs at FGCU which are partially offered by the USF Sarasota Campus. From Table 4 it is apparent that areas of particular concern for USF Sarasota in FGCU's first year will most likely be the Master's program in Criminology and the Bachelor's programs in Sociology, History, Finance, Management, Marketing, Information Systems/Decision Sciences, and Computer Science. When FGCU begins to expand its program offerings (circa 2000), enrollment concerns will also include the Bachelor's program in Economics. It is also probable that students from Fort Myers who currently commute to Sarasota will choose the FGCU campus for any available full programs or individual courses they can transfer.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It appears from the preceding discussion that although the impact of the FGCU on USF is likely to be minor in areas such as Facilities, Personnel, Recruitment, the impact on overall USF student enrollment, especially enrollment at the Sarasota campus, is likely to be quite substantial, however, not necessarily economically disadvantageous. As noted, in the first few years, we may experience a net positive financial effect from closing down the Fort Myers Campus. The new university may have an impact on USF's future enrollment growth, largely because of the population growth the Fort Myers areas is currently experiencing. Most other impacts should prove fairly minor, at least for the next several years. The Sarasota campus should expect to experience a reduction in students from the Fort Myers area and its southern areas (e.g. Charlotte County) as FGCU brings more of its programs into effect.

A point to be noted is that most of the student headcount and FTE losses are likely to arise in 1997 - 98, the first year of operation of the FGCU, and if the projections hold, not much loss growth is projected over the following several years.

Recommendations

- We should monitor student enrollment at the Sarasota campus and develop specific projections of future enrollment that account for the probable loss of student credit hours (SCH) to FGCU.
- It might prove beneficial to emphasize programs at the Sarasota Campus that are not in FGCU's plans (for example, Rehabilitation Counseling, Economics and Engineering).

References

Micceri, T. (1994). Costs and expenditures per FTE student, RAP Analytical Report 9408.5.

Micceri, T., & Waugh, G. (1995). An overview of probable impacts on USF from the Florida Gulf Coast University. RAP Analytical Report 9502.2

Waugh, G. (1994). Projected USF enrollment losses due to the new Gulf Coast University, RAP Analytical Report 9407.1.

Table 1
Projected Student Headcount Losses of USF to Florida Gulf Coast University

Student Level	1997–1998			2000–2001		
	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring
Losses Due to Current Fort Myers Enrollment						
Unclassified	315	504	470	315	504	470
Lower Level	0	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Level	548	887	962	548	887	962
Masters	130	163	209	130	163	209
Total	993	1,554	1,641	993	1,554	1,641
Losses Due to Majors Added (or Deleted) at Fort Myers (i.e., FGCU)						
Unclassified	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lower Level	104	331	281	106	338	286
Upper Level	79	126	123	90	143	140
Masters	-11	-3	-6	-9	-2	-2
Total	172	454	397	187	480	424
Total Losses						
Unclassified	315	504	470	315	504	470
Lower Level	104	331	281	106	348	286
Upper Level	627	1,013	1,085	638	1,030	1,102
Masters	119	160	203	121	161	207
Total	1,165	2,008	2,038	1,180	2,034	2,065

Note: Negative values represent students gained by USF because of deleted graduate (Master's) programs at the FGCU.

Table 2
Projected Annual Student FTE Losses of USF to Florida Gulf Coast University

Student Level	1997–1998	2000–20001
Losses Due to Current Fort Myers Enrollment		
Unclassified	144	144
Lower Level	0	0
Upper Level	507	507
Masters	83	83
Total	735	735
Losses Due to Majors Added (or Deleted) at Fort Myers (i.e., FGCU)		
Unclassified	0	0
Lower Level	*209	213
Upper Level	83	94
Masters	-2	0
Total	289	307
Total Losses		
Unclassified	144	144
Lower Level	209	213
Upper Level	590	601
Masters	81	84
Total	1,024	1,042

* The computed figure is 209, but the SUS target for FGCU is only 100 (which they are currently negotiating with the SUS). This figure is almost undoubtedly an overestimate. Thus, the lower-level estimates for student credit hours and headcount are also likely to be overestimates.

Note: For Undergraduate students: 1 FTE = 40 student credit hours;
 For Masters students: 1 FTE = 32 students credit hours.
 Negative values are FTE gained by USF because of deleted graduate (Master's) programs at the FGCU.

Table 3
Planned programs at FGCU and the partial programs offered by USF at the Sarasota Campus

Florida Gulf Coast University		USF Sarasota
Programs to Begin in the 1st Year Of Opening	Programs to Begin 3-5 Years After Opening	Current Partial Programs
College of Arts & Sciences		
Criminology (<i>Master's</i>)		Criminology (<i>Master's</i>)
	Economics (<i>Bachelor's</i>)	Economics (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
History (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		History (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
Sociology (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		Sociology (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
College of Business		
Finance (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		Finance (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
Management (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		Management (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
Marketing (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		Marketing (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
Information Systems/ Decision Sciences (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		Information Systems/ Decision Sciences (<i>Bachelor's</i>)
College of Engineering		
Computer Science (<i>Bachelor's</i>)		Computer Science (<i>Bachelor's</i>)