

teacher recognition — are still unresolved, but we have opened the forum for discussion.

Florida universities are responding to the challenge to demonstrate excellence, too. The Board of Regents has worked hard to develop statewide and national indicators against which to measure their progress each year. Despite the scarcity of regularly updated national data and the inconsistency of data collection elements, seven measures have been selected to identify states in the upper quartile and compare Florida's universities with them over a long-term basis. Some of these indicators have implications for state funding; others impact on student performance and special program development:

1. Average full-time faculty salaries by rank and by program for the academic year (Florida has improved its standing to 14th in the nation, with average faculty salaries of \$35,500).
2. Number of National Merit Scholarship students enrolled as first-time-in-college students. (Florida has recently fallen from second to fourth place and must strive to stay ahead in this measure).
3. State appropriations to the State University System per student headcount. (In 1983-84, Florida's appropriation of \$4196/headcount was in the upper quartile but down from its position of ninth the year before.)
4. Number of full-time scientists and engineers employed at public universities. (An indicator where Florida shines, having moved up to 8th and looking forward to continued progress as the seeds of improvement recently planted in this important area bear fruit.)
5. State financial aid per student. (This is an area of challenge for the future, Florida has slipped to 16th place, with \$30.67/student.)

6. Research Library Rank. (Only 36 states have public university research libraries; Florida has two, one at the University of Florida in Gainesville and another at Florida State University in Tallahassee. Our ranking has fallen each of the last three years, but our libraries are comparatively young, and we are working hard to regain our position and continue to improve.)
7. Number of Phi Beta Kappa Chapters. (Florida and ten other states have two chapters; California and New York lead the nation with 10 and 9, respectively.)

We have a way to go yet to achieve our goals of national status. Our university system is young and has undergone significant change in its brief history. Only three of our nine public universities existed before 1960. But we are proud of the national standing recently conferred upon the University of Florida by its invitation to join the American Association of Universities, a distinction enjoyed by only seven other Southern universities.

The proliferation of institutions in Florida was a conscious attempt to make higher education maximally accessible to all Florida citizens and to encourage each university to develop programs of excellence according to its designated mission. The Board of Regents governs the system and the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the State Board of Education for statewide planning and independent studies.

The Master Plan for Postsecondary Education that was endorsed by the Florida Legislature in 1983 described the way the system should appear by the end of the century. Task forces for citizen involvement in developing the universities' responses to these goals underscore the collaborative nature of our hopes.

We invite business to continue to take an active leadership and participation role in these exciting changes as we strive toward a national ranking for all our schools.

