

## **An Advisory Urging Caution in the Implementation of Proposed STEM Initiatives**

**Whereas** the Florida legislature and the Florida Board of Governors are currently proposing fundamental changes to the state university system to emphasize STEM majors and graduates throughout the State University System by decreasing student choices and limiting support in other areas; and

**Whereas** the proposed changes, if enacted in full, would radically alter the nature of higher education itself in the SUS, and the broad opportunities to pursue higher education now available, indefinitely into the future by differentially supporting STEM programs, faculty, and students over non-STEM programs, which would result in the diminution of the long-established mission of universities which has been to provide for advanced learning comprising all fields of study and for the general education of all students in order to enable their full, well-informed, and reasoned engagement in their own governance; and

**Whereas** the STEM disciplines have always recognized and promoted incorporating a strong liberal arts foundation to STEM education in enhancing student preparation in terms of practice and accreditation; and

**Whereas** the vocational and professional preparation of graduates in STEM fields has always been recognized as one important dimension of the purpose and mission of universities historically, but only as one of many similarly important dimensions; and

**Whereas**, an immediate financial difficulty at the state level, whether lasting five years or fifteen, should not drive legislators or governors to radically redefine the mission, purpose, and goals of our entire higher education system for decades to come, and

**Whereas** some of the changes of a funding and curricular nature for the sake of increased STEM enrollments are acknowledged to be desirable for those interested in careers in those fields, to satisfy the growing need for graduates in STEM fields in our increasingly technological and scientific state, and to enhance the revenue base of the state economy in several dimensions; and

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Faculty Senate of the University of Central Florida urges the Florida legislature, the Florida Board of Governors, and the University of Central Florida administration that any plans and actions taken to emphasize placement of students in STEM fields be judiciously balanced to maintain the identity and mission of the university as an institution that embraces and fosters learning in all academic fields. And, furthermore, that any implementation of the proposed STEM changes be undertaken only with the active involvement of the Faculty Senate well before the fact, in the spirit of genuine shared governance. The idea of universities as unified entities encompassing and valuing all fields of higher learning has been recognized throughout history as being of central societal importance in order to cultivate an intellectually sophisticated and civically engaged citizenry for the sake of the common good of society as a whole.