USF’s Critical Priorities for the 2005 Session

Preserve Base Funding
As has been the case for the past several years, USF’s number one priority is to avoid any damaging budget cuts to our base. This will be a particularly important topic during the 2005 Legislative Session as we deal with the impact of four major hurricanes. Also, $28 million of USF’s base budget is at risk with the potential implementation of the new Performance Funding Model.

Implement and Fund the Board of Governors New Enrollment Formula
USF’s top priority for new funding is for the legislature to fully fund the Board of Governors (BOG) enrollment request of $78.3 million—over 26% of which—$20.6 million, would be allocated to growth in the USF System. The BOG has also recommended a new enrollment funding formula for legislative approval and funding that would create a much more equitable mechanism for funding new students. Implementation of this formula is particularly important for a dynamic, urban-growth university such as USF, which has been historically under-funded under the old expenditure-based formula.

Fund Capital Construction
The Legislature must provide additional non-recurring general revenue to enhance the $169 million currently allocated for university construction, which is inadequate to fund any much-needed new construction. In order to make it possible for USF to continue to develop into a top-50 research institution and provide additional access within the USF System, it is critical that funding be provided for critical construction projects, starting with planning funds for our top two priorities— the Science and Technology Facility in St. Petersburg and the Music Building in Tampa, as well as the new Lakeland Campus Phase One.

Targeted Critical Statewide Needs
The BOG has recommended $2.57 million for funding at USF’s College of Nursing and USF St. Petersburg for addressing Florida’s critical nursing shortage. These funds would be utilized to dramatically increase the number of RN’s and RN’s with advanced degrees and expertise for hospitals in the Tampa Bay region. USF St. Petersburg will be an integral part of this initiative by providing general education and lower-division science courses to nursing students in their first two years of study.

Academic Enhancements/Board Initiatives
The BOG has requested a lump-sum appropriation in the amount of $87.5 million for academic priorities identified by university Boards of Trustees and Campus Boards that will further the goals of the BOG system-wide strategic plan. The USF System would be allocated over 19% of this funding—$16.5 million—for critical priorities such as expanding graduate enrollment, the Health Science Center Biotechnology initiative, Sarasota and Lakeland program expansion, and assistance in funding faculty and staff salaries, among others.

Matching Gifts
Florida’s Matching Gift Program is recognized as one of the most successful public-private education partnerships in the nation. Our Florida Legislature did a great job during the 2004 Session in clearing up the backlog of gifts that required matching. Since last spring, our universities have also been successful in raising another $32 million in private donations, which is the BOG request for matching state dollars.