State University System
Education and General
2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request
Form I

University(s):	
Request Title:	**Building on Success: Florida's Premier Engineering & Technology University**
Date Request Approved by University Board of Trustees:	**July 30, 2024**
Recurring Funds Requested:	**$75,000,000**
Non-Recurring Funds Requested:	
Total Funds Requested:	**$75,000,000**
Please check the request type below:	
Shared Services/System-Wide Request	
Unique Request	**X**

I. Purpose –

1. Describe the overall purpose of the plan, specific goal(s) and metrics, specific activities that will help achieve the goal(s), and how these goals and initiatives align with strategic priorities and accountability plan established by each university (include whether this is a new or expanded service/program). If expanded, what has been accomplished with the current service/program?

2. *Describe any projected impact on academic programs, student enrollments, and student services.*

Investing in Florida's Premier Engineering and Technology University

UCF is Florida's Premier Engineering and Technology University. Hardwired for bold exploration and discovery, UCF continues to defy traditional limits of education with a focus on educating the workforce of the future and research that impacts society and drives economic growth and prosperity. Every day, we bring together driven, talented people with the right opportunities and partners to unleash potential and generate a positive impact on society.

With the support of the focused investment by the State of Florida over the past three years, our outcomes are delivering trajectory-changing, high-quality education at scale, with a focus on engineering and hi-tech programs. This has allowed UCF to graduate the highest number of students annually in the State University System, serving as a launchpad for individual and community prosperity, producing the skilled leaders needed to power Florida's future focused workforce.

As a result of the state's increased support, UCF has made focused investments across the university's engineering, computer science, and technology focused operations. This year, UCF's engineering program has risen to #45 among public institutions in the most recent U.S. News & World Report rankings and is one of only two programs to be ranked in the Top 50 in the State of Florida. UCF's scholarly productivity, total number of doctoral degrees granted, and total research expenditures are also all highly ranked and, and with recent state support, on a strong upward trajectory. The university anticipates this is just the beginning of our rise as we continue to deploy programs and hires made possible by this new state investment.

As a critical contributor to Florida's established and emerging hi-tech industries, UCF has increased its enrollment in our College of Engineering and Computer Science by approximately 1,500 students in the past two years and the college is on track to increase by an additional 1,000 in the 2024-25 academic year. These efforts provide the talent that is needed to drive growing industries important to Florida's future while simultaneously placing our graduates in high paying jobs. These results have only been possible because of the state's focused investment and a powerful return on investment.

Looking forward, this new legislative budget request will further fuel UCF's upward trajectory and enable UCF to become one of two Top 25 engineering programs in the state. This is critically important because, by the numbers, UCF drives Florida's engineering and hi-tech workforce and accordingly, the state's economy.

UCF's steadfast commitment to providing Florida's prepared workforce is made possible through regular, productive collaboration with the state's top industry leaders. Through these meaningful interactions, UCF's legislative budget request responds to industries' direct requests for the preparation and established competencies of graduates entering the workforce.

In these regular conversations with Central Florida's industry leaders, including among others, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Blue Origin, Addition Financial, FAIRWINDS Credit Union, Mitsubishi Power Systems, Universal Orlando Parks & Resorts, KPMG, Accenture, L3Harris, and AdventHealth, and many others, a common desired skill set is described to include a workforce with proficiencies in the implementation of AI tools, expertise in cybersecurity, and the ability to use data analytics tools in meaningful ways to improve operations and services. This sought-after workforce would also have both technical proficiency and effective communications and presentation skills.

UCF is continuing to innovate program offerings, using both for-credit academic offerings, industry certifications and other initiatives to respond to the call of employers, preparing our graduates for career success.

Building on UCF's track record of success and arising directly from industry input, this additional funding request encompasses three specific goals:

Goal 1: Top 25 Ranking, Public Engineering College: UCF's engineering goal is to be ranked in the Top 25 of public engineering colleges around the nation. As a result of the state's prior investments, UCF's engineering is ranked #45 among public institutions in the most recent U.S. News and World Report rankings. UCF is one of only two Florida institutions ranked in the Top 50 of public engineering colleges around the nation. UCF's engineering scholarly productivity is on par with several institutions (e.g., UF, others) that are currently ranked in the Top 25 of public engineering colleges around the nation. Successes made possible by the state's investment in the pursuit of this goal include the ability to hire top producing faculty in the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and other STEM-focused UCF colleges, in critical areas such as AI, Cyber, Energy, Semiconductors, AE-Space, and Digital Twin technology, to name a few. These new faculty hires in areas of critical importance for the state are positively impacting students teaching, research and other experiential learning opportunities. This legislative budget request will ensure UCF's continuing trajectory to be the second Top 25 engineering program in the state to work in collaboration with industry.

Goal 2: Top Producer of Engineering and Computer Science Talent: UCF's College of Engineering & Computer Science is working toward the goal of enrolling 20,000 students (16,000 undergraduate students and 4,000 graduate students). This is a critical goal for meeting the needs of Florida's established and emerging hi-tech industries. According to the most recent ASEE (American Society of Engineering Education) Engineering Degrees report, UCF is ranked:
- No. 7 nationwide in the number of engineering and computer science degrees awarded.
- No. 1 in the number of Mechanical Engineering degrees awarded.
- No. 2 in the number of minority degrees awarded.
- No. 3 in the number of computer science degrees awarded.
- No. 4 in the number of Aerospace Engineering degrees awarded.
- No. 4 in the number of Computer Engineering degrees awarded.
- No. 10 in the number of Electrical Engineering degrees awarded.

According to the latest survey (2022-2023 CECS graduates), conducted six months after their graduation, two thirds of the BS and MS employed graduates have found work in Florida. It is also worth noting that approximately 90% of these graduates are employed six months after graduation. This provides Florida a competitive edge in attracting businesses and industries that rely on a highly educated workforce and facilitates impactful partnerships with these industries, such as Lockheed Martin, Siemens-Energy, Mitsubishi Power, Duke, Northrop Grumman, Orlando Health, others. UCF has increased its engineering enrollment by approximately 1,500 students in the past two years and is on track to increase it by an additional 1,000 students in the 2024-25 academic year. This is a direct result of increased state funding.

Goal 3: Infuse Engineering and Technology across the University's Academic Offerings: Our future will need graduates in all fields with the critical thinking and leadership skills to innovate, lead, and adapt at incredible speeds. UCF is focused on leveraging our strength in engineering and computer science to innovate across all disciplines to ensure every graduate is prepared to leverage AI and technology.

Powering Florida's Semiconductor Workforce
Florida already has a significant semiconductor workforce and is poised for further growth in this sector, particularly in Central Florida. The state ranks third in the nation for semiconductor establishments, with 110 semiconductor-related businesses. Florida's semiconductor industry employs more than 13,000 people from local universities, professionals relocating from tech hubs and transitioning from related industries. UCF plays a crucial role in expanding and enhancing the semiconductor workforce in Central Florida. Some of UCF's successes in this domain include: 1) UCF received an $8.8M for Digital Twin Initiative as part of a Build Back Better Regional Challenge. The investment will expand the semiconductor manufacturing potential of NeoCity, a 500-acre technology district in Kissimmee. It will establish a hub for semiconductor reshoring, benefitting aerospace, engineering, healthcare and other industries nationally. 2) UCF was one of the educational partners of a $160M Economic Engines effort, funded by NSF. This effort, referred to as Central Florida Semiconductor Innovation Engine was led by the International Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing Research (ICAMR, Inc) and aims to play a critical role for semiconductor advanced packaging design and manufacturing. 3) UCF offers specialized curricula and an accelerated 2+2 Semiconductor Manufacturing program through partnerships with Valencia College and collaborating with companies like SkyWater Technology.

State funding support in the 2023 and 2024 sessions have supported new faculty hires in Semiconductor and Digital Twin efforts. Funds from this 2025 LBR will be used to support additional faculty hires, support staff and renovate/expand lab facilities that educate the next generation semiconductor workforce.

Investing in AI and Robotics
UCF has a dedicated Artificial Intelligence Initiative that has established the university as a leading AI research and workforce provider. The university offers high quality education in AI for both undergraduate and graduate students. The AI initiative is spearheaded by the internationally recognized Center for Research in Computer Vision, ranked No. 8 nationwide (csrankings.org). Through the previous two years of state investment, UCF has hired faculty in AI focusing on the theory of AI and applications of AI, such as Computer Vision, Business and Medicine. Some of the successes of this AI initiative effort, involving new AI hires and existing AI hires, is scholarly work published in top quality venues, such as CVPR (Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition), ICML (International Conference on Machine Learning), ICLR (International Conference on Learning Representations), IROS (International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems).

UCF's request, through new 2025-26 funding, is to expand the investment in AI and related areas while paying special attention to Robotics. Recent advances in computational power and artificial intelligence (AI) are revolutionizing the field of robotics, enabling capabilities that were previously unattainable. Enhanced computational power allows robots to process vast amounts of data in real time, making them more responsive and efficient. This is crucial for complex tasks such as object recognition, navigation, and real-time decision-making, where speed and accuracy are essential. Given its long-established and significant presence in the areas relevant to Robotics including a Top 8 ranked graduate program in computer-vision and artificial intelligence, UCF has recently started an MS degree in Robotics and Autonomous Systems.

The significance of robotics in the future is immense, as these technologies are set to revolutionize numerous industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and logistics. As the integration of robotics into various sectors accelerates, the demand for a skilled workforce proficient in robotics design, programming, and maintenance is becoming increasingly critical. To continue the momentum and expand proven strengths in AI and related disciplines, UCF seeks additional state investment in AI with special emphasis in Robotics.

Hypersonics, Aerospace Engineering & Space
The state's recent investment has also supported UCF's ongoing research in Aerospace and Space, and specifically Hypersonics research at UCF. Achieving ultra-high-speed flight at hypersonic speeds is now a national priority and an international focus driving the hypersonics and space race. This intensifying effort is focused on Speed and Space, allowing flight through our atmosphere at very high speeds and efficient entry and exit from planetary atmospheres, making hypersonic defense systems, space exploration, and intercontinental travel as routine as intercity travel is today. UCF has hired faculty members with varied expertise in hypersonics-related research. This FY 2025-26 request seeks to build on UCF's successes in continuing to expand UCF's capabilities in this important research focal area.

To build on these successes, UCF seeks additional funding to expand and sustain expertise in other space-related programs and enhance the needed research infrastructure. UCF is the No.1 workforce provider for the Aerospace and Defense industries and is in the vicinity of KSC and a booming space industry on the East coast, making this continued investment a high priority. UCF will establish a Center for Evaluation and Mitigation of Radiation Effects in Space. Among other capabilities, this center is envisioned to emerge as the sole research facility in the Southeast dedicated to evaluating the reliability and safety of systems and supplies designed for space operations against high energy radiations. This pioneering facility would carry profound implications for both governmental and commercial entities engaged in the development of space-rated systems, supplies, and technologies, many of which maintain a substantial presence in the Southeast, particularly in Florida. The establishment of this center will significantly enhance the educational programs to meet the workforce needs of defense and space electronics. An example of such a program is the recently established Electronics Parts Engineering graduate certificate in collaboration with NASA. In addition, the center will position Florida researchers favorably to compete for research funding dedicated to rad-hard assurance in space and defense applications from agencies such as DOE, NASA, AFRL, Space Force, DARPA, DTRA, and defense/aerospace companies. The Center will also meet the needs of defense and aerospace enterprises, both governmental and private, including NASA flight centers, Missile Defense Agency and its support companies, Aerospace Corporation, SpaceX, Blue Origin, EPC Space, Renesas Electronic Inc., L3Harris, Lockheed Martin Space, and Honeywell.

Medicine, Healthcare & Technology
UCF's biomedical engineering research is diverse and extensive, covering areas from bioinspired engineering to surgical devices and sensors. UCFs focus on interdisciplinary research, particularly the collaboration between the College of Engineering and Computer Science and the College of Medicine, positions it well in the field of biomedical engineering and medical technology. The emphasis on translational research also demonstrates the strong connection between academic research and practical applications in healthcare. Examples of ongoing innovative bioengineering projects include: (A) Rapid Lyme disease test, (B) Real-time blood monitor of blood clots during surgery, (C) Engineering

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solutions to cardiovascular issues, (D) Bioinspired deployable shells for medical applications, (E) Additive manufacturing of ultra soft biocompatible elastic materials, (F) Neuro-engineering, (G) Prosthetics and advanced rehabilitation.

UCF offers a Ph.D. program in Biomedical Engineering with emphasis on biofluids and biomechanics. The MD/MSBME track allows students to earn an M.D. and M.S. in Biomedical Engineering simultaneously. With new funding, UCF will establish an interdisciplinary Biomedical Engineering, Science, and Technology Institute to include engineering, science, and medicine faculty. This Institute will draw faculty expertise from a variety of colleges/units in the biomedical field from a multitude of departments in Engineering and Computer Science and will facilitate the genesis of a Biomedical Engineering Department within the College of Engineering and Computer Science, support the existing/expanded MS and PhD degrees in Biomedical Engineering and start a new BS degree program in Biomedical Engineering. The Institute will house faculty in bioengineering and medical innovation from several research areas including but not limited to digital twin, computational biological materials, drug delivery, medical robotics.

Advanced Manufacturing
While engineering and manufacturing jobs are in such high demand nationwide, the number of vacant entry-level manufacturing positions continues to grow, and the manufacturing skills gap in the U.S. could result in 2.1 million unfilled jobs by 2030, according to Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute. According to Enterprise Florida Florida's the state's 20,000+ manufacturing establishments produce almost everything (e.g., aerospace products, batteries, communications equipment, semi-conductors) and rely on the STEM workforce graduates from UCF and other SUS institutions.

Advanced manufacturing helps maintain U.S. leadership in global markets and strengthens the national economy by creating higher-paying jobs and enhancing competitiveness on a global stage. Examples of advanced manufacturing efforts at UCF include Optimizing 3D printing processes: UCF collaborated with the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Army Research Laboratory to improve the additive manufacturing process for high-strength magnesium alloy, achieving higher density. Developing lightweight components: The research aims to enable the production of extreme lightweight components for military applications, supporting the Army's modernization strategy to lighten the load for soldiers. Advancing smart manufacturing: UCF is focusing on AI-enabled smart manufacturing, combining additive manufacturing with artificial intelligence technologies. UCF researchers are exploring various applications of additive manufacturing, including lightweight structural applications, micro-electro-mechanical systems, and microscale and nanoscale manufacturing. Enhancing education and workforce development: The university is integrating additive manufacturing research into educational programs, providing opportunities for students to engage in cutting-edge projects and prepare for careers in advanced manufacturing.

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays an increasingly significant role in modern CAD/CAM technology, enhancing various aspects of the design and manufacturing process. Three-dimensional Computer Aided Design (CAD) models provide better visualization of products before manufacturing, enabling better decision-making and reducing costly mistakes. This is an area that UCF will take a lead role using digital twins to speed up product development cycles, reduce costs, improve product quality, and create more complex and innovative

designs. UCF will also collaborate with Valencia Community College and Seminole State College to train students in manufacturing.

New funding in FY 2025-26 will be used to hire additional faculty with expertise in Advanced Manufacturing who will focus on research innovations in this focal area and support the training of the manufacturing workforce needed in Florida.

Student Success: Math Launch & I-Design Institute
FY 2025-26 funding will also be used to expand the Math Launch initiative, established by the College of Engineering & Computer Science in Fall 2022 to prepare engineering students (FTICs) to be Calculus I ready and set them up for success in their majors. There is clear evidence that calculus readiness translates to timely degree completion and can be a significant contributor to UCF's efforts to improve the 4-year graduation success rates. Math Launch offers a multi-level self-paced math class that allows students, who enter as FTICs, and are not Calculus-I ready to become Calculus-I ready faster. The designated multi-level, self-paced, math class provides students with exposure to a deeper level of learning as they build their confidence and sharpen their algebra, trigonometry, pre-calculus math skills & knowledge and prepares them for Calculus I in one semester. In Fall 2023, Math Launch has shown impressive results by succeeding in making 65% of the participating students Calculus-I ready in one semester.

Funding will also support UCF's I-Design Institute, the organizational mechanism for growing and transforming the senior capstone design experience for UCF undergraduates into a world class institute in design education and research. UCF graduates 2,000+ students annually, corresponding to 300-400 senior design projects conducted. The primary purpose of the I-Design Institute is to involve more CECS students in interdisciplinary senior design projects that are supported by industry. The student who participates in and completes an industry-sponsored senior design project improves his/her chances for successful entry into the sponsor's workforce and makes an impact on an engineering design challenge at the same time.

LBR funds will be used to hire mentor/practitioners to oversee the design projects, support advancement expertise to engage with more companies that sponsor these projects and provide a collaboration space to house these expanded-enhanced project efforts. The eventual impact would be to triple the existing number of CECS students who will have the support to participate in industry sponsored senior design capstone experience.

Leveling FTE Funding, Infrastructure Support & Employee Excellence
UCF currently has the lowest state funding support per FTE among the six largest research universities in the State University System. UCF has been incredibly efficient in serving approximately 70,000 annually, consistently awarding over 17,000 degrees each year in high-demand industries that fuel Florida's workforce.

Additional base funding will allow the university to more adequately invest in student support services, recruit and retain high-performing faculty and staff, and more quickly deliver on our strategic goals, which are aligned with those of the State University System.

It would take $80 million in additional recurring funding to bring UCF in line with FIU, which has the second lowest funding per FTE in the cohort of SUS research universities. UCF's efficient structure has also made navigating inflationary pressures more difficult, and base funding would allow the university to invest in critical areas.

UCF Funding per FTE compared to FIU and FAU

	General Revenue	Lottery Fund	Total Allocation	Student FTE	Allocation per FTE	Difference per FTE from UCF	Delta based on UCF FTE
FAU	$162,467,620	$47,070,460	$214,538,080	23,715	$9,047	$2,622	$149,412,048
FIU	$256,875,352	$69,486,920	$326,362,272	41,749	$7,817	$1,392	$79,321,728
UCF	$284,933,249	$81,192,902	$366,126,151	56,984	$6,425		

UCF Funding per FTE compared to Florida's Preeminent Universities

	General Revenue	Lottery Fund	Total Allocation	Student FTE	Allocation per FTE	Difference per FTE from UCF	Delta based on UCF FTE
UCF	$284,933,249	$81,192,902	$366,126,151	56,984	$6,425		
FSU	$435,867,563	$88,575,745	$524,443,308	39,302	$13,344	$6,919	$394,272,296
UF	$515,169,555	$106,087,173	$621,256,728	48,439	$12,826	$6,401	$364,754,584
USF	$333,644,127	$85,426,249	$419,070,376	36,606	$11,448	$5,023	$286,230,632

The university is also in need of recurring funding to support our increased focus on engineering and high-tech industries. UCF is also committed to re-purposing and renovating existing space through improved administrative efficiencies to quickly provide space for faculty growth. Investment in new construction for specialized research facilities will be needed to support this request. UCF is committed to seeking industry support, participation and co-location strategies to better align the academic experience with industry demands and to create more collaborative opportunities assist in addressing industries' challenges.

II. Return on Investment - *Describe the outcome(s) anticipated, dashboard indicator(s) to be improved, or return on investment. <u>Be specific.</u> For example, if this issue focuses on improving retention rates, indicate the current retention rate and the expected increase in the retention rate. Similarly, if the issue focuses on expanding access to academic programs or student services, indicate the current and expected outcomes.*

Attaining Top 25 public Engineering College in the nation implies that we expand our strengths or create new strengths in areas of national importance that are in line with UCF's Strategic Plan priority areas of: *Space Technologies and Systems*, *Entertainment and Immersive Experiences*, *Health and Human Performance*, *Energy and Sustainability*, *Transformative Technologies and National Security*. The industry partners that we will be impacting through these increased, expanded strengths are Aerospace and Defense companies (e.g., Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, L3Harris, Boeing, others), Energy companies (e.g., Siemens Energy, Mitsubishi Power, Duke, FPL, others), Entertainment companies (e.g., Disney, Universal, others), Health-related companies (e.g., Advent Health, Orlando Health, others). The ROI will be judged by metrics including:

1. Strategic Partnerships created (e.g., Pegasus partnerships). These would refer to partnerships that cover a multitude of collaborative activities involving, research, workforce talent, branding & communication and philanthropy.

2. Total Grants and Contracts funded by federal partners (Number and Dollar Value), *Submitted and Successful, Annual*

3. Grants and Contracts funded by industry partners (Number and Dollar Value), *Submitted and Successful, Annual*

4. Collaborative Grants and Contracts with industry partners funded by other agencies (Number and Dollar Value), primarily federal agencies, *Submitted and Successful, Annual*

5. Workforce Talent Employed by industry partners (Internships, Jobs), *Annual*

6. Branding Opportunities coordinated with industry partners (Joint Stories, Visits to Campus, Lab Naming, Guest Speakers, others), *Annual*

7. Other Industry Partner Efforts (Professors of Practice, Faculty Sabbaticals, Senior Design Sponsorship), *Annual*

<u>Becoming a </u>top Producer of Engineering and Computer Science Talent will drive a strong return on investment.

The ROI of this effort will be judged by metrics, such as:

1. Expanded Engineering and Computer Science BS Workforce: According to the latest ASEE 2022 numbers (2021-2022) CECS produced 2,094 BS degrees. CECS is ranked No. 7 amongst the BS degree producers in the nation. When the enrollment of the CECS Undergraduate student population reaches its projected number of 16,000, it is expected that CECS will be producing 3,000 BS degrees placing it at Top 5 producers in the nation.

2. Expanded Engineering and Computer Science MS Workforce. According to the latest ASEE 2022 numbers (2021-2022) CECS produced 450 MS degrees. CECS is ranked

No. 37 amongst the MS degree producers in the nation. When the enrollment of the CECS MS student population reaches its projected number of 2,500, it is expected that CECS will be producing 1,000 MS degrees placing it at Top 15 MS producers in the nation.

3. Expanded Engineering and Computer Science PhD Workforce: According to the latest ASEE 2022 numbers (2021-2022) CECS produced 149 PhD degrees. CECS is ranked No. 24 amongst the PhD degree producers in the nation. When the enrollment of the CECS PhD student population reaches its projected number of 1,500, it is expected that CECS will be producing 250 PhD degrees placing it at Top 10 PhD producers in the nation.

4. Increased 4-Year Graduation Rate of FTIC CECS Students: There is a strong effort, underway, to increase the 4-Year Graduation Rate of FTIC's entering the College of Engineering and Computer Science. This effort encompasses other colleges as well.

5. Expanded availability of STEM workforce talent for the industry and government sectors in the State of Florida. Number of degrees produced by CECS and related majors, *Annual*.

6. Expanded partnerships with industry and government agencies in the State of Florida who are interested in employing the expanded STEM workforce. Number of partnerships (different than Pegasus partnerships), new partnerships, impact of select partnerships, *Annual*.

The new investments requested in this legislative budget request are focused in targeted areas that support the university's commitment to becoming a Top 50 public research university and achieving the State University System' preeminent research university designation by 2027.

III. Personnel – *Describe personnel hiring and retention plans, making sure to connect both plans to initiative(s) and goal(s) described in section I. State the amount of faculty FTE and staff FTE and estimated funding amounts used for retention and new hires in each category. In describing faculty hires, provide overall hiring goals, including academic area(s) of expertise and anticipated hiring level (e.g. assistant professor, associate professor, full professor). Please describe how funds used for faculty or staff retention will help the institution achieve its stated goals.*

Investing in Engineering and High-Tech Faculty and Student Programs: $40 Million
Many of the activities described in Section I, will be supported by the following additional faculty and staff resources totaling $40 million.

1. $15M in faculty resources (tenured and tenure earning; T-TE) in areas central to Florida's high-tech economy, and the focus of the university's strategic plan. These areas are: 1) Space Technologies and Systems, 2) Energy and Sustainability; 3) Transformative Technologies and National Security; 4) Health and Human Performance, and 5) Entertainment and Immersive Experiences. These funds will be used to hire approximately 80 T-TE hires at an average salary rate of $140k.

2. $8.5M in faculty resources (instructors and lectures; I-L) that will support the increased teaching mission of 25,000 engineering, computer science, and technology focused students. These faculty will be hired in focused disciplines according to the increased

number of students populations in these disciplines (e.g., aerospace engineering and computer science have seen sizable increases in the last two years, expected to continue in future years). These funds will be used to hire approximately 70 I-L hires at an average salary rate of $92.5k.

3. $5M in salary retention enhancements for research and teaching productive faculty. The path to becoming Top 25 public Engineering college, and leading in Computer Science, Hypersonics, Aerospace, and other technology oriented disciplines implies that the University could provide competitive salary packages to research and teaching productive faculty on a persistent, sustained basis. These funds will be used for salary enhancements of 400 faculty (over a period of years), each salary enhancement being a $10k average salary enhancement.

4. $3.5M for GTA stipend support. This support is needed to cover the expanded teaching responsibilities of the Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology programs that intends to expand its student population by approximately 50% to an eventual number of 20,000 students. These funds will be used to support 100 new GTAs.

5. $3M to increase the support staff infrastructure that would serve the expanded faculty and student population. Examples of support staff that are needed include administrative assistants, grant specialists, budget analysts, lab managers, IT support, others. These funds will be used to hire 30 support personnel staff.

6. $5M of recurring funds to lease of facilities that support some of the activities mentioned in this LBR (e.g. I-Design Lab Space, Evaluation and Mitigation of Radiation Effects in Space Facility).

Investing in a High-Tech Infrastructure: $35 Million
Catching up to the per FTE funding level of Florida's other major research universities is critical for UCF and the state to achieve its goals in providing a talented workforce, prepared for the requirements of industry and the future.

As additional faculty are hired, this request seeks funding to be invested in the required infrastructure to support their teaching and research and increased student support. This includes curriculum development and creating innovative delivery modalities, increased IT and cybersecurity infrastructure, additional expenses associated with large scale research initiatives and projects (e.g. hypersonic propulsion testing) and other increased operating expenses incurred in the scaling of additional labs, and start-up packages for new faculty. This funding will also be used to further invest in proven, data-driven, strategic initiatives that support student progression and success.

Additionally, UCF needs to implement a series of merit-based wage programs that will support the retention of exceptional employees across the university who are critical in supporting the university's mission and future. Retaining highly skilled and technical staff to support our focus on engineering and technology is becoming increasingly expensive but is required to remain competitive.

IV. Facilities *(If this issue requires an expansion or construction of a facility, please complete the following table.):*

	Facility Project Title	Fiscal Year	Amount Requested	Priority Number
1.	Research II	FY25-26 FY26-27	$ 57,320,625 $ 57,320,625 $ 114,641,250	Priority No. 1
2.				