A bill to be entitled
An act relating to higher education; requiring the
boards of trustees of the University of Florida and
Florida Polytechnic University to submit a merger
application to a specified entity; providing for the
transfer of the Florida Polytechnic University to the
University of Florida; requiring Florida Polytechnic
University to take specified actions to obtain
consents for the transfer of a specified educational
broadband service station license; requiring Florida
Polytechnic University to assign the license for such
service station to the University of Florida;
providing duties and responsibilities of the
University of Florida; requiring the boards of
trustees of the Florida State University and New
College of Florida to submit a merger application to a
specified entity; providing for the transfer of New
College of Florida to the Florida State University;
requiring the tuition and fees for Florida Polytechnic
University and New College of Florida to remain in
place for a specified period; providing immunity;
amending s. 1004.32, F.S.; providing for the
contingent future repeal of specified provisions
relating to New College of Florida; amending ss.
1004.345 and 1004.3451, F.S.; providing for the
contingent future repeal of specified provisions relating to Florida Polytechnic University; amending s. 1009.534, F.S.; authorizing Florida Academic Scholars to receive a stipend, as provided in the General Appropriations Act, for specified educational expenses; amending s. 1009.535, F.S.; revising the amount of an award certain Florida Medallion Scholars may receive under certain circumstances; amending ss. 1009.89 and 1009.891, F.S.; deleting legislative findings; providing that the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program and the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program, respectively, are financial aid programs for specified state residents; revising the eligibility criteria for such programs; providing effective dates.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The boards of trustees of the University of Florida and Florida Polytechnic University shall submit to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools an application for merger. Upon approval by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the application for merger, the following transfers shall be made:
(1) All real and personal property, licenses and associated revenues, existing contracts, unexpended balances, appropriations, allocations, funds, and mutually agreed-upon obligations, responsibilities, and liabilities of the Florida Polytechnic University shall be transferred to the University of Florida.

(2) All Florida Industrial and Phosphate Research Institute programs, functions, offices, records, faculty positions, and staff positions of the Florida Polytechnic University shall be transferred to the University of Florida.

Section 2. Florida Polytechnic University shall take appropriate action to obtain all consents required by the Federal Communications Commission and third parties before assigning the educational broadband service station license that has a Federal Communications Commission-issued reference point in Polk County to the University of Florida. Upon obtaining such consents, and upon the approval of the Federal Communications Commission, Florida Polytechnic University shall assign the license, including the excess capacity lease agreement for the license, to the University of Florida, which shall assume the benefits, obligations, and liabilities as the successor in interest, including all regulatory and contractual responsibilities. This section is contingent upon the approval of the assignment of the lease by the Federal Communications Commission.
Section 3. The boards of trustees of the Florida State University and New College of Florida shall submit to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools an application for merger. Upon approval by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the merger, all real and personal property, licenses and associated revenues, existing contracts, unexpended balances, appropriations, allocations, funds, and mutually agreed-upon obligations, responsibilities, and liabilities of New College of Florida shall be transferred to Florida State University.

Section 4. The tuition and fees established by the Board of Governors for Florida Polytechnic University and New College of Florida shall remain in place for undergraduate and graduate students of Florida Polytechnic University and New College of Florida, respectively, until such students graduate.

Section 5. The boards of trustees of the University of Florida, Florida Polytechnic University, Florida State University, and New College of Florida and their respective officers, trustees, employees, attorneys, and agents, are immune from all civil liability pertaining to or arising from compliance with this act, including the transfers required in sections 1., 2., and 3. of this act.

Section 6. Subsection (5) is added to section 1004.32, Florida Statutes, to read:
1004.32  New College of Florida.—

(5) This section shall stand repealed upon approval by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the merger of the Florida State University and New College of Florida.

Section 7. Subsection (4) is added to section 1004.345, Florida Statutes, to read:

1004.345  The Florida Polytechnic University.—

(4) This section shall stand repealed upon approval by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the merger of the University of Florida and Florida Polytechnic University.

Section 8. Section 1004.3451, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1004.3451  Direct-support organization for Florida Polytechnic University.—In accordance with s. 1004.28 and the regulations of the Board of Governors, the Board of Trustees of the Florida Polytechnic University may certify a direct-support organization to serve the Florida Polytechnic University. The Board of Trustees of the Florida Polytechnic University of South Florida, in conjunction with the University of South Florida Foundation, shall develop and implement a plan to transfer, after obtaining consent from the appropriate donors, assets derived from donations intended for the enhancement of the University of South Florida Polytechnic campus to the University of South Florida.
of Florida Foundation. This section shall stand repealed upon approval by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the merger of the University of Florida and Florida Polytechnic University new direct-support organization serving the Florida Polytechnic University.

Section 9. Effective July 1, 2020, subsection (2) of section 1009.534, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.534 Florida Academic Scholars award.—
(2) A Florida Academic Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution is eligible, beginning in the 2017-2018 academic year, for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (5), (6), and (7); 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); and 1009.24(4), (7)-(13), (14)(r), and (16), as applicable, and is eligible for an additional stipend $300 each fall and spring academic semester or the equivalent for textbooks, to assist with the payment of educational expenses as funds are specifically appropriated in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 10. Subsection (3) of section 1009.535, Florida Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (5), subsection (2) is amended, and a new subsection (3) and subsection (4) are added to that section, to read:
1009.535 Florida Medallion Scholars award.—

(2) A Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in a certificate, diploma, associate, or baccalaureate degree program at a public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution is eligible, beginning in the fall 2018 semester, for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 75 percent of tuition and fees established under ss. 1009.22(3), (5), (6), and (7); 1009.23(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), and (11); and 1009.24(4), (7)-(13), (14)(r), and (16), as applicable, to assist with the payment of educational expenses.

(3)(a) Beginning with students initially eligible for an award in the fall 2021 semester and thereafter, a Florida Medallion Scholar who is enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution is eligible for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of tuition and fees listed under subsection (2).

(b) Upon completion of his or her associate degree at a Florida College System institution, the student may transfer to a state university or other eligible public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution or remain at the Florida College System institution and enroll in a baccalaureate degree program to continue receiving his or her award.

(4) If a Florida Medallion Scholar under subsection (3) earns an associate degree from a Florida College System institution with:
(a) A cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale, he or she is eligible for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 100 percent of the tuition and fees listed under subsection (2) upon enrolling in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution.

(b) A cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or higher on a 4.0 scale, but below a 3.5, he or she is eligible for an award equal to the amount necessary to pay 75 percent of tuition and fees listed under subsection (2) upon enrolling in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution.

Section 11. Subsections (1) and (4) of section 1009.89, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.89 The William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program.

1 The Legislature finds and declares that independent nonprofit colleges and universities eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program are an integral part of the higher education system in this state and that a significant number of state residents choose this form of higher education. The Legislature further finds that a strong and viable system of independent nonprofit colleges and universities reduces the tax burden on the citizens of the state. Because the William L. Boyd, IV,
Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program is not related to a student's financial need or other criteria upon which financial aid programs are based, it is the intent of the Legislature that The William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program is not be considered a financial aid program for state residents attending eligible independent nonprofit colleges and universities in the state but rather a tuition assistance program for its citizens.

(4) A person is eligible to receive such William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education grant if:

(a) He or she meets the general requirements, including residency, for student eligibility as provided in s. 1009.40, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(b) 1. He or she is enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at an eligible college or university;

2. He or she is not enrolled in a program of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity; and

3. He or she is making satisfactory academic progress as defined by the college or university in which he or she is enrolled.

(c) Beginning with students seeking an initial award in the fall 2021 semester and thereafter, he or she applies for the Pell Grant and meets the eligibility requirements in s. 1009.51 for demonstrated financial need for the Florida Private Student Assistance Grant Program.
Section 12. Subsections (1) and (4) of section 1009.891, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1009.891 The Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program.—

(1) The Legislature finds and declares that independent for-profit colleges and universities eligible to participate in the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program are an integral part of the higher education system in this state and that a significant number of state residents choose this form of higher education. The Legislature further finds that strong, viable independent for-profit colleges and universities reduce the tax burden on the residents of the state. Because the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program is not related to a student's financial need or other criteria upon which financial aid programs are based, it is the intent of the Legislature that The Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program is not be considered a financial aid program but rather a tuition assistance program for state residents attending eligible independent for-profit and nonprofit colleges and universities in the state.

(4) A person is eligible to receive an access grant if:

(a) He or she meets the general requirements, including residency, for student eligibility as provided in s. 1009.40, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(b) He or she is enrolled as a full-time undergraduate
student at an eligible college or university in a program of study leading to a baccalaureate degree;

2. He or she is not enrolled in a program of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity; and

3. He or she is making satisfactory academic progress as defined by the college or university in which he or she is enrolled.

(c) Beginning with students seeking an initial award in the fall 2021 semester and thereafter, he or she applies for the Pell Grant and meets the eligibility requirements in s. 1009.52 for demonstrated financial need for the Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant Program.

Section 13. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act and except for this section, which shall take effect upon becoming a law, this act shall take effect July 1, 2021.