

**STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1529**

**TITLE: Resolution Advocating for Increased Transparency Regarding Financial Aid and Degree-Seeking Status for the Innovation Academy Program at the University of Florida**

**AUTHOR(S): Senator Alexander M. Dantoulis**

**SPONSORS: Innovation Academy Cabinet Director Sophie Benson**

**WHEREAS**, the Innovation Academy (IA) serves as one of four first-year admission pathways at the University of Florida and “facilitates participation in focused interactions and small group experiences that explore the dimensions of innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, ethics, and leadership” [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, students in the Innovation Academy take in-person classes in the Spring and Summer, as IA is a Spring/Summer program, and are welcome to “engage in co-curricular activities, pursue internships, study abroad,” or take online-only classes during the Fall [2]; and,

**WHEREAS**, “First Fall is the time between an IA student’s acceptance into UF and their first spring term of enrollment on UF campus, most typically the fall semester directly following high school graduation. Students are considered non-degree seeking during this term” [3]; and,

**WHEREAS**, Innovation Academy students are permitted to enroll in up to 11 online credit hours within this First Fall - the Fall semester immediately following their acceptance into the University of Florida - but are not considered degree-seeking students [3]; and,

**WHEREAS**, non-degree seeking students are not eligible for need-based financial aid [4]; and,

**WHEREAS**, newly admitted Innovation Academy students who begin classes in First Fall may face significant financial difficulties, as these individuals may not understand that their classification as not degree-seeking prohibits them from receiving any need-based financial aid; and,

**WHEREAS**, for Innovation Academy students who do choose to take classes within their First Fall, the University of Florida must input the credits taken in First Fall into an individual’s degree audit once the individual becomes considered a degree-seeking student; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Innovation Academy team currently consists of four full-time faculty members, two advisors, and one support staff member to support upwards of 1,000 Innovation Academy students [5][6]; then,

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate acknowledges the implications of not being a degree-seeking student in terms of financial aid.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate calls upon the University of Florida's Innovation Academy Administration to ensure that all IA students understand the implications of taking classes in their First Fall, as well.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate supports increased visibility and transparency of the nuances in the Innovation Academy's Spring/Summer schedule.

**THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the value of the Innovation Academy Program and its need for adequate funding in order to sustain experienced faculty and staff niche to the program.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Chief Enrollment Strategist Dr. Mary G Parker, Innovation Academy Director Dr. Jeff Citty, and Innovation Academy Cabinet Director Sophia Benson.*

[1] <https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/about/how-to-apply/>

[2] <https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/about/what-is-ia/>

[3] <https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/about/faq-new-students/>

[4] <https://programs.distance.ufhealth.org/general-faq/>

[5] <https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/about/innovation-academy-team/>

[6] <https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2023/10/annual-report-2021-2022.pdf>