

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1727

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for Increased Biodiversity on Campus

AUTHOR(S): Senator Ella Furman, Senator Valentina Bernal, and Senator Arshan Falasiri

SPONSORS: Senator Jocelyn Riley, Senator Maya Idiculla, Senator Anjani Sharma

WHEREAS, biodiversity is crucial for maintaining resilient ecosystems, supporting species variety, and fostering environmental sustainability [1]; and,

WHEREAS, native plants support local wildlife and provide necessary habitats for pollinators, insects, birds, and other native fauna [2]; and,

WHEREAS, biodiversity is a key part of combating climate change; a 2017 study led by Bronson Griscom found that nature can provide 30% of the emissions reductions needed by 2030 to prevent climate disaster [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Student Senate aims to foster a culture of sustainability and environmental stewardship among students, faculty, and staff as demonstrated by SSB 2024-1543 (The NATIVE Act) passed by the Student Senate; and,

WHEREAS, promoting the use of native plant species on campus will encourage ecological balance, reduce invasive species competition, and protect the integrity of Florida's natural ecosystems [4]; and,

WHEREAS, studies indicate that increased biodiversity on campuses improves both air quality and mental health outcomes for students and faculty, contributing to a healthier, greener learning environment [5]; and,

WHEREAS, universities across the world such as University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, UC Berkeley, Yale, and others have successfully implemented sustainability measures to increase biodiversity on their campuses which were found to reduce maintenance costs, demonstrating the viability of this approach [5]; and,

WHEREAS, native planting initiatives could be timed to align with Earth Day or other campus events that promote sustainability, creating opportunities for student involvement and environmental education; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of promoting biodiversity through the increased use of native plant species on campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student

Senate aims to increase collaboration with University of Florida administration and other stakeholders to ensure the implementation of sustainable landscaping practices that prioritize native plants over non-native plants.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate encourages all students, faculty, and staff to support biodiversity by participating in campus-led sustainability events and educational initiatives promoting native plant use.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the Senior Director of Operations of UF Facilities Services Gregg Clarke, UF Vice President for Business Affairs Curtis Reynolds, UF Biodiversity Institute Director Pamela Soltis, Unlitter UF President Liel Shachr, Secretary of Florida Department of Environmental Protection Shawn Hamilton, Office of Sustainability Director Matthew Williams, and Office of Sustainability Senior Programs Director Liz Storn

[1] <https://stories.flores.unu.edu/fostering-action-for-biodiversity/>

[2] <https://www.audubon.org/content/why-native-plants-matter#:~:text=Native%20plants%20provide%20nectar%20for,for%20all%20forms%20of%20wildlife.ife.>

[3] <https://www.conservation.org/blog/why-is-biodiversity-important>

[4] <https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/why-manage-plants/native-plants/>

[5]

https://sustainability.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/oxpoch_iaru_biodiversity_report_13.10.21.pdf