Declaration of the University of South Florida Faculty Senate in opposition to proposed Amendments 5 and 7 to the Florida Constitution

Whereas, the Faculty Senate of the University of South Florida (USF) is the primary faculty advisory body on matters pertaining to the welfare of the university; and

Whereas, Article IX, Section 1 (a) of the Constitution of the State of Florida declares that “The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida”, and that it is “a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders”; and

Whereas, Article IX, Section 7 (a) of the Constitution of the State of Florida declares that the system of governance for the state university system of Florida is established “In order to achieve excellence through teaching students, advancing research and providing public service for the benefit of Florida’s citizens, their communities and economies”; and

Whereas, achieving excellence through teaching students, advancing research and providing public service for the Florida’s citizens, their communities and economies requires the provision of adequate funding to public state universities; and

Whereas, achieving excellence through teaching students requires that students entering Florida public universities themselves be academically prepared for university education; and

Whereas, ensuring the academic preparedness of students entering Florida public universities requires the provision of adequate funding to primary and secondary public schools in the State of Florida; and

Whereas, the text of proposed Amendment 5 to the Florida Constitution, on the 2018 Florida election ballot, “Prohibits the legislature from imposing, authorizing, or raising a state tax or fee except through legislation approved by a two-thirds vote of each house of the legislature in a bill containing no other subject”; and

Whereas, the passage and enactment of Amendment 5 would substantially decrease the probability that adequate funding will be provided to public state universities and primary and secondary public schools; and

Whereas, proposed Amendment 7 to the Florida Constitution, on the 2018 Florida election ballot, “Requires supermajority votes by university trustees and state university system board of governors to raise or impose all legislatively authorized fees if law requires approval by those bodies”¹; and

¹ Official Ballot summary. https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_7,_First_Responder_and_Military_Member_
Whereas, the passage and enactment of proposed amendment 7 would substantially decrease the probability that Florida public universities will be provided adequate funding; therefore

Be It Declared that the USF Faculty Senate strongly opposes both proposed Amendment 5 and proposed Amendment 7; and

Be It Declared that the USF Faculty Senate strongly encourages all university faculty, administrators, staff, and students to vote “NO” on proposed Amendment 5 and proposed Amendment 7; and

Be It Declared that the USF Faculty Senate strongly encourages all eligible voters in the state of Florida to vote “NO” on proposed Amendment 5 and proposed Amendment 7.

Adopted September 26, 2018