



Universities face tougher graduation standard

by Lloyd Dunkelberger/The News Service of Florida

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will now have to meet a four-year graduation standard.

Board of Governors, meeting Wednesday at the University of North Florida, approved a new performance-funding model that will include the four-year rate for undergraduates as well as a revised standard rewarding schools that have large numbers of students on Pell grants, a federal need-based aid program.

The full Board of Governors will take up the plan on Thursday.

Gov. Rick Scott that required a change from a former six-year graduation standard to a four-year measure, as well as the Pell grant-related adjustment.

The two metrics are part of 10 measures the board will use to rank the universities in June and then distribute the \$560 million in performance funding for the 2018-2019 academic year. The Legislature increased the

million in matching funds.

The universities at the top of the rankings get a larger share of the money, while the three bottom universities do not receive any of the state performance funding.

In 2016, the four-year graduation rate averaged 45 percent across the system, ranging from 18 percent at Florida A&M University to 67 percent at the University of Florida, according to the board.

Only four schools --- the University of South Florida, New College of Florida, the University of Florida and Florida State University --- -range goal of having at least a 50 percent four-year graduation rate.

Schools that meet or exceed the 50 percent mark under the new standard will secure the maximum points in the formula, while schools with a four-year graduation rate below 38.8 percent will receive no points.

The board is also expected to approve the change that will reward schools that serve many Pell grant

