



The 1999 Legislative Session is coming to a close as we enter its final week. The \$48.9 billion budget is finished and will be voted out on Tuesday. The State University System did very well this year, as did Florida State University (**see related story**). The SUS received a \$250 million (11.77 percent) increase in funding over last year's budget. The Chancellor began the session seeking an 11.46 percent increase. Our legislative alum, especially House Speaker John Thrasher and our local delegation, deserve a special thank you for their efforts on our behalf.

Since the budget is the only bill that constitutionally must pass the legislature, speculation is high, as it is every year, that the members will adjourn (Sine Die) prior to the Friday, April 30th, 6:00 pm deadline. But because most of this year's major substantive issues have yet to pass the full legislature, that may be difficult. Bills such as tort reform, school readiness, extension of the Preservation 2000 statute, and the Governor's education reform bill, termed the "A+ Plan," are still unresolved.

Whenever the legislators scramble to finish their work, floor debates tend to become particularly interesting. I encourage you to tune in to The Florida Channel (local cable channel 47) from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm this week for a live look at the legislative process. It may be a scene you are not likely to forget!

Please feel free to contact me by email at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu, or by calling **644-4453**, with any questions, or for copies of bills and their analysis.

Budget Highlights

The final vote on this year's \$48.9 billion state budget will be taken on Tuesday. It will then be sent to the Governor.

State University System (**with FSU's share**):

ENHANCEMENT FUNDING - \$40 million for undergraduate enhancements; \$28 million for graduate enhancements (**15%**).

STATE EMPLOYEE FEE WAIVERS - \$9.5 million (**\$2 million**).

PLANT, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE \$6.8 million (**\$861,000**).

TUITION - Five percent across-the-board increase, plus a differential tuition of up to 5 percent (**\$2.7 million in tuition differential**).

CHALLENGE GRANT/DEFERRED MAINTENANCE - \$64.1 million, of which \$59.8 million is new general revenue and the balance of which are recurring dollars.

ALTERNATIVE ADMITS - Out-of-state alternative admits will not receive any state funding. The in-state policy remains the same.

SALARIES - All state employees will receive, effective October 1, 1999, a 2.8-percent increase, with a \$1000 minimum for those employees making under \$26,000. A \$3-million performance incentive pot was also appropriated to be used for TIP, PEP, and merit.

Florida State University:

MEDICAL EDUCATION - \$40 million for expansion of our programs.

FLORIDA HIGH - \$10 million to move FSU's Developmental Research School to Southwood.

FSU/FAMU COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING - \$3 million for the Challenger Learning Center.

PECO LIST - \$21 million.

Quote of the Week

"I may come out as the speaker who passed the fewest bills..... I would consider that a badge of honor." House Speaker John Thrasher, Republican, Orange Park and FSU alumnus. Commenting on the number of bills remaining to be heard as the session approaches its final week.

Source: Tallahassee Democrat, April 25, 1999



Spotlight on Bills

CS/CS/SB 150 by Governmental Oversight and **Senator Jim Horne** (R-Orange Park, FSU Alumnus), passed out of both houses this week. The bill provides for the reorganization of the Department of Banking and Finance and makes clearer the duties and authority of the Comptroller. CS/CS/SB 150 has been substituted for the comparable House bill, HB 77.

SB 1148 by the Committee on Comprehensive Planning and **Senator Charlie Clary** (R-Destin), has been placed on the Special Order Calendar. The bill addresses the Florida Building Code, including amending the Florida statutes to specify that colleges, universities and school boards can initiate contracts for inspections of buildings. The similar House bill, **HB 1723** by **Representative Lee Constantine** (R-Altamonte Springs), was placed on the Special Order Calendar and has been read a second time.

HB 805, College Reach-Out Program by the Committee on Colleges & Universities and **Representative Robert Casey** (R-Gainesville), has passed both houses and is waiting for the Governor's signature. This bill would reinstate the College Reach Out Program, which seeks to motivate and prepare disadvantaged students to attend college, and which is scheduled for repeal on July 1, 1999. There is no companion bill in the Senate.

HB 1, State Agency Performance Report, by Governmental Operations and **Representative Bill Posey** (R-Rockledge), has been placed on the Special Order Calendar. This bill requires state agencies to provide itemized financial summaries of monies spent along with annual performance reports, and provides for potential disincentives. The Senate companion, **SB 228** by Fiscal Policy and **Senator Daniel Webster** (R-Winter Garden), has been placed on the Special Order Calendar.

HB 1411, Florida College Savings Program by **Representative Paula Dockery** (R-Lakeland), has been placed on the Special Order Calendar. The bill establishes a program through which contributions made by individuals may be invested in order to pay for college. The bill specifies certain requirements and provides for penalties. The identical Senate bill, **SB 1984** by **Senator Buddy Dyer** (D-Orlando), has passed out of the Senate and is in messages in the House. **HB 1531**, Public Records/College Savings Program, also by **Representative Paula Dockery**, allows certain information about Florida College Savings Program accounts to be exempt from public records laws. The identical Senate bill, **SB 1980** also by **Senator Dyer**, is in Rules and Calendar.

HB 2147, Charter Schools, by Education Innovation and **Representative Jim Tullis** (R-Jacksonville), revises the law regarding charter schools, including: setting an early deadline for charter applications; allowing for student transfers to a charter school outside the normal public school district; specifying who can operate a charter school; addressing academic achievement standards; requiring proof of competency of those applying to open a charter school; preventing schools from employing someone who has been dismissed, or has resigned before dismissal, over an issue of child welfare or safety. The bill is on its second reading. The Senate companion, **SB 2434**, by the Committee on Education and **Senator George Kirkpatrick** (R-Gainesville), has been placed on the Calendar.

CS/SB 1640, Charter Conversion Municipal Subdistricts, by the Committee on Education and **Senator Charlie Clary** (R-Destin), has been withdrawn from committee and placed on the Calendar. The bill allows for municipalities to apply for charter school conversion. Also, the current limit on the number of charter schools one entity can operate would not apply under this bill. The similar House bill, **HB 969** by **Representative Bill Andrews** (R-Delray Beach), has been temporarily deferred in committee.

HB 727, State Contracts with Religious Organizations, by **Representative Johnnie Byrd** (R-Plant City), allows specific state agencies to contract with religious organizations to accept certificates and vouchers for certain programs the same as any other non-governmental organization, without affecting the religious character of that organization. It also requires the state to provide a non-religious provider for participants who prefer it. The identical Senate bill, **SB 1358** by **Senator Daniel Webster** (R-Winter Garden), has been placed on the Calendar.

CS/SB 202, Beverage Law/Underage Students by Regulated Industries and **Senator Ron Silver** (D-North Miami), allows certain universities to offer alcoholic beverages to underage persons as part of a required course. The bill has been placed on the Special Order Calendar. **HB 165**, the House companion by Regulated Services and **Representative Sally Heyman** (D-North Miami), has also been placed on the Special Order Calendar.

Sources: The Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate

House
Monday, April 26 (9:20 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
Tuesday, April 27 (9:20 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
Wednesday, April 28 (10:20 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
Thursday, April 29 (9:20 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
Friday, April 30 (9:20 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)

Session
Schedule
April 26 - 30
1999

Senate
Monday, April 26 (9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
Tuesday, April 27 (9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
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