



Lawmakers worked all weekend in an attempt to wrap up the last of the budget issues still pending. It appears, however, that Speaker Thrasher and President Jennings will have to settle the pension issue, as well as the funding of a medical school at Florida State University and two new law schools in the state.

The budget is the only bill the Legislature is constitutionally required to pass during the session. Once leadership settles these few remaining budget issues, the bill must be printed and given to the legislators to review for 72 hours before the final vote can be taken. Given this, the budget must be closed and ready for print by today to meet this Friday's closing date. The rumors are very strong that this deadline will not be met, which will necessitate a special session.

Besides the few, yet very important, budget issues left to complete, all of the major SUS substantive bills have yet to pass as well. The naming bill, the credit card bill, the major gifts bill, the governance bill, and the bill that creates the FSU medical school are all on either the House or Senate calendars, ready for movement during this last week.

For a majority of the legislators, this week will be their last (unless they go into overtime!) to deliberate on the floor, due to term limits. While there is much work left to do, members of the House took time every day last week to hear the farewell speeches of some of their colleagues; that is expected to continue this week.

With a little luck (and a lot of hard work), this should be the last weekly *Legisletter* of this session, not counting the final newsletter a few weeks after the session's end. Please feel free to contact my office for any last-minute inquiries. I can be reached at **644-4453** or by e-mail at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

PENSION PLAN STALLS BUDGET TALKS

House leaders, along with Governor Jeb Bush, have refused to go along with the Senate's proposal to dip into the \$12.7 billion Florida Retirement System surplus to fund state employee benefit improvements. But the Senate leadership is refusing to back down. This stand-off stalled the budget negotiations of this past weekend and may well throw the 2000 session into overtime. If the issue is not settled by tonight, because of a 72-hour "cooling-off" period, lawmakers will not have the opportunity to vote on the budget bill until after the scheduled May 5th conclusion date.

Leadership did settle the pay package for state employees late Sunday afternoon. State employees, including graduate assistants, will receive a 2.5 percent across-the-board increase, effective October 1, 2000. The only exception is the SUS Law Enforcement Unit, which instead will receive a 6-percent increase, effective October 1, 2000.

Quote of the Week

"It's going to be kind of fast and furious", House Majority Leader Jerry Maygarden (R-Pensacola) on the final week of session

- Sarasota Herald Tribune,
April 30, 2000



Spotlight on Bills

U P D A T E S

Information Technology Management: CS/SB 2474 by Senator Jack Latvala (R-Palm Harbor), is on second reading in the Senate.

New Universities: CS /SB 2448 by Senator Don Sullivan (R-St. Petersburg), was withdrawn from the Fiscal Policy Committee and placed on the Senate Calendar. It is now on third reading. The bill was recently amended to create a one-year study creating new universities. The House companion **CS / HB 2447 by Representative Debby Sanderson (R-Ft. Lauderdale)** is still pending in the House Education Appropriations Committee.

FSU Medical School: HB 1121 by Representative Durell Peaden (R – Crestview), passed the House this morning by a vote of 199-1. The single dissenting vote came from **Representative Stacy Ritter (D- Tamarac).** The Senate companion, **SB 1692 by Senator Jim King (R-Jacksonville, FSU Alum),** passed favorably through the Fiscal Policy Committee and is now on the Special Order Calendar.

Education Governance Reorganization: HB 2263 by Governmental Operations has been received by the Senate and referred to the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Productivity. The comparable Senate bill, **SB 1680 by the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Productivity,** is still on the Senate Calendar. There are differences between these two bills.

Designation of Buildings and Facilities: HB 827 by Governmental Operations is still on the House Calendar. The Senate companion, **SB 1446 by Senator Jim King (R-Jacksonville),** is still on the Senate Calendar.

Retirement: HB 2393 by Committee on General Appropriations (formerly PCB GA 00-16) was withdrawn from General Government Appropriations Committee and placed on the calendar. The bill is on third reading. This bill changes the retirement system from a *defined benefit* program to a *defined contribution* program, allowing vesting at eight years and portability. **SB 1026 by the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Productivity and Senator Ron Silver (D-North Miami)** is still in Messages in the House. The bill reduces the average final compensation from the highest 5 years to the highest 3 years, and would allow vesting after five years for all member classes.

SESSIONSCHEDULE

May 1-5, 2000

SENATE

Monday, May 1	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 2	8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, May 3	8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, May 4	8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Friday, May 5	8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

HOUSE

Monday, May 1	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 2	9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, May 3	9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, May 4	9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Friday, May 5	9:30 a.m. - Sine Die

Industrial Partnership Professorships: CS/CS/ SB 74 by the Committee on Education and Senator Jim Sebesta (R - St. Petersburg), is on second reading in the House. The comparable House bill, **HB727,** did not progress out of committee.

Linkage Institutes: HB 825, by Representative Chris Hart (R-Tampa), is on third reading in the House.

Drug-Free Work Places: HB 1519 by Representative Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach), is on second reading in the House.

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