

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Volume Eleven / Number One • March 5, 2001

The 2001 Legislative Session officially begins tomorrow but the pace around the Capitol has been "session-like" since November. Because of term limits, over half the Florida House was newly elected, which required freshmen members to undergo introductory training. In addition, the Special Session in December to "settle" the U.S. presidential election, along with the usual committee assignments and meetings, made for a particularly hectic pre-session atmosphere this year.

After the election dust settled, Florida State University counted 17 alumni in the Legislature, including Senate President **John McKay** (Republican-Bradenton), Senate Ways and Means Chairman, **Jim Horne** (R-Orange Park), and Senate Majority Leader **Jim King** (R-Jacksonville).

Once again, this session's biggest issue for the SUS and FSU will be the state budget (**see related story**). Other major issues include a reduction in the state's workforce - by privatizing state personnel agencies and eliminating career service - election reform, judicial reform, the implementation of tax exemptions, and education governance. The latter will have a big impact on the State University System and our university (**see Spotlight on Bills**).

Plans for this year's FSU Day at the Capitol, scheduled for March 29th, are being finalized. As always, it will be a Garnet and Golden day, which will allow us to honor our legislative alumni, promote our magnificent university, and celebrate our 150th anniversary.

During the course of the next nine weeks, I will keep you informed of the session's highlights through this weekly newsletter. I welcome your comments, questions, and concerns, and value your insight and knowledge. Please feel free to contact me at 644-4453, or by e-mail, kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu. Also, please know that my assistant, **Sarah Vaughan** - svaughan@govrel.fsu.edu - and my executive secretary, **Karen Thurber** - kthurber@mail.fsu.edu - will gladly assist you in obtaining session information.

Kathleen

BUDGET NEWS

The state's latest revenue estimates won't be released until this Friday, but lawmakers are preparing themselves - and the public - for bad news. In anticipation of revenue shortfalls, the Governor has recommended a five-percent decrease in the State Universities' general revenue; the Senate has recommended a **\$67.5 million** cut, while the House suggests a cut of **\$40 million**. In other words, all indications are that our state's universities should expect less revenue this year. This revenue shortage - coupled with a **\$900 million** Medicaid deficit that lawmakers must fill and **\$300 million** in tax cuts that legislators want to implement - could make this year's budget process particularly painful. Anticipated cuts to Florida State University are as follows:

SENATE:

FSU Medical School -- 25% reduction on **\$9.575 million**

Total reduction: **\$2.393 million.**

FSU Basic Sciences -- 25% reduction on **\$16.04 million**

Total reduction: **\$4.011 million.**

Ringling Museum -- 25% reduction on **\$2.250 million**

Total reduction: **\$562,500.**

FSU School of Chiropractic -- 25% reduction on **\$500,000**

Total reduction: **\$125,000. (continued)**

SESSION SCHEDULE MARCH 6-9, 2001

HOUSE

Tuesday, March 6 9:50 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
*Joint Session 11:00 a.m.-Noon

Wednesday, March 7 12:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 8 12:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

SENATE

Tuesday, March 6 10:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.
*Joint Session 11:00 a.m.-Noon

Wednesday, March 7 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Quote of the Week

"I'd like to shoot for \$450 million [in tax cuts]. I like the argument that during good times, you cut taxes. During bad times, you cut taxes."

-Florida House Speaker Tom Feeney
Herald-Tribune News Coast, February 9, 2001

Spotlight on Bills

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE A PRIORITY

Last year, the Legislature passed a bill creating a seamless system of K-20 education. A task force, appointed by the Governor, was assigned the job of creating a new system of governance for the ten state universities. The Education Governance Task Force released its recommendations to the Legislature two weeks ago. This week, the House Committee on Colleges and Universities, chaired by Rep. **Bev Kilmer** (R-Marianna), and the Senate Education Committee, chaired by Senator **Ken Pruitt** (R-St. Lucie), will begin work on the recommendations of the task force. Their proposed bill is expected to establish, among

other things, university boards of trustees (along with their duties and authority) a comprehensive accountability system, the trustees' control of tuition and fees, and the establishment of a public-body corporate status instead of the current state-employee status.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION TELEVISED

On March 6, 2001, The Florida Channel, a service of WFSU-TV and the Florida Legislature, begins its gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Florida House and Senate. Live coverage begins daily at 8:00 a.m. and lasts until 6:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday until May 4, 2001.

In addition to this live coverage, a nightly

wrap-up program, *Capitol Update*, offers clear, concise reports of the bills, issues, and debates of the day. *Capitol Update* airs between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. It airs on Sunshine Network (local cable channel 23), The Florida Channel (local cable channel 47), and on public television affiliates around the state. The Florida Channel will also broadcast the Governor's State of the State Address live at 11:00 a.m. ET on Tuesday March 6, 2001. The Democrats' response will immediately follow the address. The Florida Channel also provides live audio and video feeds of each day's legislative proceedings on the Internet at:

<http://www.wfsu.org>

(continued)

FSU Autism Center -- 15% reduction on **\$816,666**

Total reduction: **\$122,500.**

SUS State Employee Fee Waiver -- **\$9.5 million**

Total reduction: **\$9.5 million.**

SUS Public Broadcasting -- 50% reduction on **\$9.362 million**

Total reduction: **\$4.681 million.**

In addition, the Senate also proposes that one out of every ten faculty members teach an

additional course, which would trim the SUS budget by **\$43.7 million.**

HOUSE

FSU School of Chiropractic -- **\$500,000**

Total reduction: **\$500,000**

FSU Autism Center -- 15% reduction on **\$816,666**

Total reduction: **\$122,500.**

SUS State Employee Fee Waiver -- **\$9.5 million**

Total reduction: **\$9.5 million.**

SUS Public Broadcasting -- 20% reduction on **\$9.362 million**

Total reduction: **\$1.872 million.**

In his 2001 budget recommendations, the Governor included **\$15 million** in capitol outlay for the continued planning of our College of Medicine building and **\$3.8 million** in general revenue for the operation of our community campuses in Orlando and Pensacola.



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