

# LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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Education governance - along with other education issues - as well as budgets, reunions, and Florida State University were the focal points of the fourth week of the 2001 Session.

During this past week both the Senate and the House Education Governance Reorganization bills made their debut in respective committee stops. Last Monday, the Senate Education Committee - chaired by Senator **Ken Pruitt** (R-Port St. Lucie) - passed the heavily amended **Senate Bill 2108** (see related story). Two days later, a similar bill - **House Bill 1533**, with amendments - passed the House Colleges and Universities Committee, which is chaired by Representative **Bev Kilmer** (R-Marianna).

In other education-related news, Education Commissioner **Charlie Crist** (FSU Alum) and Lt. Governor **Frank Brogan** released a proposal that would grant scholarships to Florida college students who pledge to teach four years in a public school. These four-year scholarships would cover tuition and fees and could be used at any public or private institution in Florida that has a state-certified teacher education program. The 5,000 annual scholarships that their proposal puts forth would cost the state **\$12- to \$15-million**.

The State University System naming bills continue to move through the process. An amendment was added last week to the House bill that names a science and research center on the FAMU campus for outgoing President **Frederick Humphries**.

The House and Senate debated their respective budgets in full chambers last week; each budget should be ready for passage early this week (see **Budget Update**).

Among all of this serious lawmaking, 53 former Senators joined 38 current colleagues for a Florida Senate reunion, an event that occurs every two years. Former Senator and Governor **Ruben Askew** (FSU Alum) participated in these festivities, swapping stories with other veteran lawmakers.

Rounding out this very busy week was FSU Day at the Capitol last Thursday. FSU Day is always a great opportunity for us to show off our academic excellence to the legislative community. This year, 26 campus entities set up interesting displays. In addition, the FSU Pep Band, the Collegians singing group, our Cheerleaders, and the Golden Girls performed to an enthusiastic Garnet-and-Gold crowd.

As always, I welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions. I can be reached at 644-4453, or by e-mail at [kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu](mailto:kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu).

*Kathleen*

## BUDGET NEWS

Last Thursday, the Senate tweaked its **\$47.8 billion** funding plan, earmarking a third of this amount for education. On Friday, the House debated its **\$53.3 billion** plan during a six-hour session. Both the House and Senate will finalize their budgets this week and begin meeting in conference committees to hash out their differences. (The budget, according to the state constitution, is the only bill the Legislature is required to pass each year.)

The biggest difference between the two chambers' spending plans is tax exemptions. The House has more than **\$300 million** in cuts while the Senate has none.

Representative **Curtis Richardson** (D-Tallahassee, FSU Alum) proposed an amendment to the House budget that requested **\$200,000** from the Governor's Office allotment for funding the FSU School of Social Work Boy's Choir. However, he withdrew his amendment before House members had an opportunity to debate the issue.

The chair of the House Appropriations Committee - Representative **Carlos Lacasa** (R-Miami) - as well as the chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee - Senator **Jim Horne**, (R-Orange Park, FSU Alum) - are pleased with their respective products thus far, especially in view of the tight budget year.

## SESSION SCHEDULE April 2 - 6

### House

Monday, April 2	11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 3	10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 4	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### Senate

Tuesday, April 3	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon
Wednesday, April 4	9:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Friday, April 6	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

## Quote of the Week

"You're talking about a cultural change, and there are going to be bumps in the road. [But] there's a spirit to succeed, and I feel that the recommendations the task force proposed for the process will bode well for us."

- Senate Education Committee chair Ken Pruitt (R-Port St. Lucie) commenting on the Education Governance issue

Source: Tallahassee Democrat, March 26, 2001

# Spotlight on Bills

**HB 443** - Industrial Partnership Professorships, by Representative **Rob Wallace** (R-Tampa) - allows for the creation of up to 15 industrial-partnership professorships at state universities and provides tax credits for corporate sponsors. This bill is successfully moving through the committee process and will be heard next by the Fiscal Policy and Resources Committee. A similar bill has been filed in the Senate (**SB 1164**) and is awaiting further action.

**SB 1404** - Program in Medical Sciences, by the Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care and Senator **Kendrick Meek** (D-Miami) - passed and is now in the Senate Education Committee. This bill's main goal is to study the establishment of a PIMS program at FAMU in affiliation with the University of Florida College of Medicine.

**HB 1509** - Student Financial Assistance, by Representative **Mario Diaz-Balart** (R-Miami) - was introduced last week and referred to the House Committee on Colleges and Universities. This bill revises the eligibility requirements and calculations for Bright Futures scholarships. It also increases the amount of money to be paid in financial aid from the financial-aid fee to specified Florida residents.

**HB 1511** - State Universities, by Representative **Leslie Walters** (FSU Alum, R-Largo) - will be heard in the Committee on Colleges and Universities today. This bill increases specific student fees and allows for the establishment of student governments at state universities, giving them the power to create procedures for election and removal of officers. An identical Senate bill - **SB 2172** by Senator **Don Sullivan**

(R-St. Petersburg) - has been introduced and is awaiting further action.

**SB 1636** - Community College/Program Approval, by Senator **Ken Pruitt** (R-Port St. Lucie) - would allow community colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs. The bill will be heard today in the Senate Education Committee.

## UPDATE

**HB 989** - University Designations, by Representative **Dave Meador** (R-Lake Mary) - passed unanimously through the Council for Smarter Government last week. The council added an amendment allowing the science research building at Florida A&M University to be named the "Frederick S. Humphries Science and Research Center." A Senate companion bill is awaiting further action.

## EDUCATION GOVERNANCE BILLS UPDATE

Last week, the Senate and House Education Governance Reorganization bills made their first committee appearances. On Monday, the Senate Education Committee heard over 40 amendments (13 of those 40 were SUS-drafted amendments) to **SB 2108**. (Ten of the 13 amendments passed the committee.) On Wednesday, the House Colleges and Universities Committee debated **HB 1533**, again considering over 40 amendments (3 of those 40 amendments were drafted by the SUS and two of the three passed the committee).

Prior to the committee hearings referred to above, the Senate's bill - **SB 2108** - differed from the House bill - **HB 1533** - in the following ways:

### **SB 2108:**

- contained a provision by which any program recommended by the Florida Board of Education that required state funding for more than one year would have to be presented in a multi-year budget plan. (The House adopted similar language last Wednesday.)
- included language that allows the Florida Board of Education to establish the mission of individual public universities. (The SUS offered an amendment that includes community colleges to this charge, which passed both committees.)
- states that no university board shall be composed of a majority of members from one county. (The House Bill does not contain this restriction; it currently does not mandate residency but permits the Governor to consider regional representatives as appropriate when appointing members to the Boards of Trustees.)
- includes a provision that allows university personnel to administer programs in accordance with state law and with the rules and guidelines of the Florida Board of Education. It does not, however, refer to the rules and guidelines of the Florida Board of Education.

- includes a paragraph on Challenge Grants that is not contained in the House bill.

In addition, three amendments passed both of these House and Senate Committees last week. These amendments provide for:

- clarification that each institution's board of trustees (BOTs) will include only one student body president (institutions with multiple campuses - where each has their own student government association - requested this clarification).
- a reduction in the term of the chairs for each university's BOTs from 6 years to 2 years, with the possibility of one additional consecutive term.
- the establishment of the Commissioner's Education Reorganization Workgroup, which would direct and provide oversight to this reorganization (membership in this ER workgroup is specifically designated in each chambers' bill).

Furthermore, the Senate's Bill (as compared to the House's):

- clarifies the initial duties of the university boards upon their appointment and also requires that the action plans and timelines submitted to the Florida Board of Education focus on the body corporate employer and away from the current state agency status.
- gives greater flexibility to each university in setting tuition rates, specifically allowing for a range like that established currently for community colleges (which allows for changes to be made, by recommendation of the president, that vary no more than ten percent below and fifteen percent above the fee schedule adopted by the Florida Board of Education).
- grants the university boards the statutory authority needed to support existing rules and policies in the areas of procurement, faculty-practice plans, and credit- and non-credit-education offerings. (It also clarifies that the BOTs are to

establish personnel programs rather than administer them.)

Finally, the Senate Bill grants university presidents the authority to dispose of state-owned tangible personal property during the transitional year when state agency status is maintained.

The House Colleges and Universities Committee passed an amendment that would cap Health, Activity and Service, and Athletic fees to 40 percent of the matriculation fee. Within the 40 percent cap, universities may not increase these fees by more than 2 percent each year. This House Committee also spent much time debating the inclusion and role of the student body presidents to the local boards but ultimately left this issue up for debate. (By comparison, the Senate voted down an amendment that would have included the student body president as a voting member of the university BOTs.) The Senate bill has three more committee stops before being heard by the full body while the House bill has one.

