



# LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS



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As the seventh week of the 2001 Legislative Session begins, almost all of the SUS priority bills continue to move through the process.

The budget conferees will be appointed later this week, and will begin to hammer out the differences between the two budgets (see related story).

Substantive committees have completed their work in the House, but will continue to meet this week in the Senate. Bills left pending in a committee of substance after this week will have a harder time passing the full Legislature. Appropriations committees will continue to meet and hear bills.

The Education Reorganization bills, Senate Bill 2108 and House Bill 1533, will be heard in the Senate and House Education Appropriations Committees this week. Both will again be amended. The bills will then be ready for floor action next week (see related story).

Other major issues of this session continue to make the headlines. The Governor's Service First Plan, which would transfer over 16 thousand Career Service employees into the Select Exempt status, passed a Senate Committee last week with amendments. The bill now defines "reasonable cause" for firing state employees and retains the burden of proof on state agencies for justifying disciplinary actions. A similar House Bill shifts the burden of proof to the employee and allows firing to be based on the "sound discretion" of agency heads. In other news, the Senate last week approved a bill that would allow for the storing of untreated water in deep underground wells. Current federal guidelines mandate that water be treated for contaminants before pumping it into underground wells, to protect the aquifer which provides Florida's drinking water.

As the final three weeks of the session unfold, I welcome your comments and questions about issues that may concern you. Please contact me at 644-4453 or by e-mail at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

## BUDGET NEWS

Budget conferees are expected to be appointed later this week, and will meet to hammer out the substantial differences between the House and Senate budget proposals. The House budget includes **\$350 million** in tax exemptions, the Senate does not.

Other differences between the budgets:

- The senate plan requires one in every ten faculty members to teach an extra course, resulting in a **\$43.7 million** cut to the SUS. The House does not include this provision.
- The House budget includes **\$15 million** for the FSU College of Medicine building, the Senate includes **\$5 million**.
- The Senate plan includes **\$21 million** in capital and recurring dollars for the Ringling Museum, the House does not.

The House includes about **\$42 million** for the Challenge Grant program, the Senate includes about **\$33 million**.

Both the House and the Senate budgets include just under **\$16 million** for the FSU Medical School.

## Education Governance Update

Both the House and Senate Education Appropriations Committees will hear the Education Governance bills this week. **House Bill 1533** is scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday at 1:00 PM. The bill, sponsored by **Representative Evelyn Lynn** (R-Ormond Beach), will come before the committee she also chairs. While the SUS has several amendments drafted to the bill, few are expected to be adopted on Tuesday. **HB 1533** will then move to the House floor next week. The Senate companion, **SB 2108** will be heard in the Senate Education Appropriations Committee on Wednesday. Several SUS drafted amendments are expected to be adopted. The Senate bill will then move to the full Senate for a hearing next week.

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## SESSION SCHEDULE April 16 - 20

### House

Monday, April 16 3:30 - 6:00 p.m.

### Senate

Wednesday, April 18 12:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 19 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, April 20 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

# Spotlight on Bills

**HB 1477**, Uniform Athlete Agents Act, by **Representative Holly Benson** (R-Pensacola), passed the House Business Regulation Committee last Thursday and moves to the Committee on Crime Prevention, Corrections and Safety. The bill retains most of the current athlete agent regulations but adds changes recommended by the Uniform State Laws' Uniform Athlete Agents Act of 2000. The act establishes specific terms for agreements and contact between athletes and athlete agents to the benefit or protection of athletes, and expands the penalties and fines section of the current law.

**HB 1547**, Florida Prepaid College Program, by **Representative Jeff Kottkamp** (R-Cape Coral), redefines the term "purchaser" and authorizes the purchase of pre-paid contracts for a scholarship program by not-for-profit entities. The bill was passed unanimously by the House Education Appropriations Committee last week and will be heard this week by the House Council for Lifelong Learning.

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Both bills abolish the Board of Regents as of July 1, 2001 and create a ten-member University Board of Trustees at each institution. Powers and duties of the trustees would include the hiring and firing of the university president, consulting and submitting the institutional budget request, and approving new and terminating existing undergraduate and graduate programs. Issues relating to purchasing, credit and debit cards and facilities are also included in both bills.

The Senate bill includes several provisions not currently included in the House bill. Examples of those provisions include sovereign immunity status and tuition language.

The amended bills and analyses will be available on Online Sunshine ([www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us)) later this week.

## UPDATE

**CS/HB 271**, Corporate Income Tax, by **Representative Joe Negron** (R-Stuart), was passed by the Senate last week. It was substituted for a similar Senate bill, **CS/SB 1048**. The bill provides tax credit to companies for contributions made to nonprofit scholarship funding organization.

**HB 989**, Universities Designations, by **Representative David Meador** (R-Lake Mary), remains on the Special Order Calendar in the House. The Senate companion, **SB 2054** by **Senator Jim Sebesta** (R- St. Petersburg), passed the Senate Education Committee last week and is now in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

**SB 1046**, Student Financial Aid, by **Senator Ken Pruitt** (R- Port St. Lucie), passed unanimously from the Senate Education Committee last week. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education will next hear the bill, which addresses the Teach Florida program.

**SB 1190**, St. Petersburg Junior College, by **Senator Don Sullivan** (R-St. Petersburg), redesignates the junior college as St. Petersburg College & University Center. The bill is now on second reading in the Senate.

**HB 1509**, Student Financial Assistance, by **Representative Mario Diaz-Balart** (R-Miami), revises the eligibility requirements for and calculations of Bright Futures Scholarships. The House Education Appropriations Committee will hear the bill this week. A similar Senate bill, **SB 1330** by **Senator Les Miller** (D-Tampa), will be heard today in the Senate Education Committee.

**HB 1533**, Education Governance Reorganization, is scheduled to be heard by the Education Appropriations Committee on Tuesday. The bill revises policy and principles regarding education governance. The Senate companion, **SB 2108**, was passed favorably with 6 amendment(s) by the Governmental Oversight and Productivity Committee last week. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education will hear the bill on Wednesday.

**SB 2188**, Education Investment Act, by **Senator Betty Holzendorf** (D-Jacksonville), passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee last week. The bill, which outlines legislative intent for specific educational investments and enhancements, now moves to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

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