

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Volume Thirteen / Number Two • March 10, 2003

Last Tuesday, amid flowers, friends and family, the 2003 Legislative Session opened with its usual ceremonial pomp. Governor Bush addressed the Legislature, and the citizens of Florida, in his fifth State of the State address. His session priorities include asking the voters to reconsider constitutional amendments on class size and the high-speed rail. Two days later, the Senate Education Committee, Chaired by **Senator Lee Constantine (R.-Altamonte Springs)** approved a class-size implementation bill that creates a partnership program between schools and businesses, encouraging companies to house K-3 classes in business facilities around the state. In the meantime, House Democrats repudiated the Governor's request to repeal the two amendments.

A university finance policy draft Proposed Committee Bill (PCB) will be discussed today in the House Subcommittee on Colleges and Universities. Among the proposals in the draft are the creation of an admissions deposit, changing the determination of resident status in statute, the creation of a technology fee for universities, and changes to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. The pivotal event of the second week of the session, however, will be on Friday, when the Revenue Estimating Conference releases updated revenue projections of state-tax collections, which will give legislators an idea of how much general revenue will be available to appropriate. It is estimated these projections will be lower than what the conference estimated four months ago, setting the stage for budget cuts next week.

Governor Bush appointed former state Senator Toni Jennings of Orlando to replace Frank Brogan as Lt. Governor. Mr. Brogan, meanwhile, began his term as President of FAU last week. And on the home front, Governor Bush also appointed FSU graduate and Tampa Bay Buccaneer Derrick Brooks to the FSU Board of Trustees, replacing Lee Hinkle, who resigned last week to apply for the University Relations Vice President position.

I've included a list of our legislative priorities for this session, and hope to track our progress against those priorities for you in this newsletter (see related story). Please feel free to contact me at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu or (850) 644-4453 with any questions or concerns you might have.

Kathleen

Trustees Approve 2003 Legislative Priorities

At its January meeting, the Florida State University Board of Trustees approved a list of legislative priorities for the 2003 Session. Those priorities include:

1. General Revenue funding. Since 2000-01, the FSU enrollment plan has increased by 10.3 percent while the General Revenue allocations have decreased by 6 percent. We are asking

the Legislature to fund the university base budget with continuing general revenue dollars.

2. Enrollment Growth funding. In last year's budget, FSU was funded for 24,771 FTE. The current projected enrollment is 25,211 FTE, leaving 439 FTE unfunded.

3. Major Gifts Program. Florida is nationally known for its successful

matching gifts program, which was designed to provide incentives for private support to public higher education institutions. Over the last few years, however, the backlog of gifts waiting to receive a state match has grown to \$150 million at our state universities and community colleges. The State Universities Presidents Association (SUPA) has endorsed a plan to secure a \$150 million 20-year bond issue. The proposal would require carrying costs to be appropriated annually from Lottery funds.

4. Tuition and Fee Flexibility. Currently, the state universities set tuition in accordance with authority granted by the Legislature, and all authorized fees are specified and capped in Florida Statutes. The Legislature's ability to allow increases in tuition and fees is tempered by the resulting impact on programs such as Bright Futures, Florida College Prepaid and need-based financial aid. However, with decreasing state support and increasing demands for quality services and programs, tuition/fee and financial aid policies must be reformed to grant more flexible authority for universities to set tuition and fee levels on their campuses.

Specific to Florida State University

FSU College of Medicine—\$4.8 Million for staff and support costs on the main campus and community campuses during its fourth year.

PECO Priorities

1. Science Building Support System Improvements—**\$4.3 million**
2. Psychology Center—**\$28.8 million**
3. Marine Science Research and Training Center—**\$3.5 million**
4. Life Sciences Teach and Research Center—**\$2.7 million**
5. Johnston Building Remodeling—**\$1.6 million**

Spotlight on Bills

HB 389, Student Athletes by Representative Wilbert "Tee" Holloway (D-Miami) Prohibits giving or offering gifts or inducements to high school or middle school athletes to encourage them to attend a particular academic institution or to become a professional athlete. Does not include scholarships. The Senate companion is **SB 1788 by Senator Anthony Hill (D-Jacksonville)**.

SB 1798, University Boards of Trustees by Senator Rod Smith (D-Gainesville) Authorizes the University Boards of Trustees to set tuition and fees and retain the proceeds. The bill requires a plan for setting fees, which allows base tuition to be reset initially and increased annually. Additionally, the bill requires a plan to specify the percentage increase that will be spent on need-based financial aid, and a report to be filed annually

with the Board of Governors. There is no House companion at this time.

SB 1370, Annual Remuneration/State University Presidents by Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville) Limits State University System Presidents' salaries, bonuses and cash-equivalent compensation to \$225,000, paid from state funds. This amount shall be used in determining benefits, including retirement. There is no House companion at this time.

SB 328, FRS/Instructional Personnel by Senator Ken Pruitt (R-Port St. Lucie) Increases the length of time K-12 instructional personnel may participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) from 60 to 96 months. A House Companion, **HB 83** was filed by **Representative Fred Brummer (R-Apopka)**.

HB 415, Obscenity/Public Libraries by Representative Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala, FSU Alumnus) Requires libraries that provide online computer access to minors install or make available software that prohibits access to obscene materials. A Senate companion, **SB 1250** was filed by **Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)**.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE

Thursday, March 13
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

HOUSE

Tuesday, March 11
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Thursday, March 13
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon



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