

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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With only a few days remaining in the 60-day regular Legislative Session, and faced with a 72-hour "cooling-off" period before a final vote can be taken on the coming year's budget, lawmakers finalized the state's \$56.5 billion spending plan yesterday. The budget is the only bill the Legislature is required to pass each year, and they are expected to ratify the 2004-2005 budget plan Friday evening.

Overall, Florida State University will receive a 7 percent increase in funds over last year, and the issues identified as University priorities at the beginning of the session will all be funded (see related story for details).

Many of the substantive bills we have been following are unlikely to pass within the remaining hours of the session, but if history is a guide, almost any issue can re-emerge during these volatile few days (see Spotlight on Bills). I will send out a newsletter that summarizes all of these issues once the dust has settled, and the Governor has announced his vetoes. Remember, you can witness the chaos of the session's final days live by watching The Florida Channel, local cable channel 4, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank all of you who participated in FSU Day at the Capitol last week. Your involvement, along with the hard work of those who coordinated this event, made for a wonderful, constructive, "garnet-and-golden" day.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have questions concerning budget or substantive issues. I can be reached at (850) 644-4453 or via e-mail at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

Kathleen

BUDGET UPDATE

Lawmakers finalized the \$56.5 billion spending plan yesterday. The budget is the only bill the Legislature is required to pass each year, and they are expected to ratify the 2004-2005 budget plan Friday evening. Below is the list of our priorities and how they fared in the budget.

National High Magnetic Field Laboratory/UF Brain Institute: Florida State received the requested \$10 million in non-recurring dollars for laboratory upgrades.

Enrollment Growth: Funded the BOG request of \$61 million, 11,496 FTE. \$4,186,406 million for FSU, which funds 813 additional FTE.

2004-05 PECO — The following projects were funded:

Utilities and Infrastructure — \$6,000,000, Building Envelope Improvements — \$250,000, Psychology Center — \$5 million, Life Sciences Teaching and Research Center — \$25 million (will house the School of Chiropractic Medicine), Land Acquisition — \$5 million, Isabelle Collier Reed Facility — \$5 million, Panama City Campus Expansion — \$2,525,000, Panama City Academic Building \$5,750,000

Tuition Policy: 7.5 percent for in-state undergrads, 12.5 percent for all others. In addition, the BOT is authorized to further increase non-resident tuition by up to 2.5 percent for any level of instruction.

Major Gifts Matching: The Legislature funded \$93,339,151 for the State University System, eliminating the current backlog. FSU's share is \$15,350,440. Additionally, the Legislature fully funded the backlog for the Courtelis Facilities Matching Program. Florida State had one project on the list, The Challenger Learning Center, which is funded at the requested \$150,000.

Salary Increases: No salary increases were approved for state employees for the upcoming fiscal year. However, there will be an across-the-board, one time bonus of \$1,000 on December 1, 2004.

Health Insurance: There will be no change in the cost of premiums for health insurance to the employee or in amount of co-payments. Any increases will be absorbed by the agency for active employees. Retired employees will have to pay the 10 percent increase.

Florida Center for Reading Research: Funds the request of \$1.6 million with recurring dollars.

Ringling Museum: \$2,256,000 is appropriated in the university's base budget.

School of Chiropractic: \$9 million in recurring funds is provided by the passage of SB 2002.

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Centers: Level funded the FSU program at the requested \$594,558 with recurring dollars.

Spotlight on Bills

HB 95, Accelerated High School Graduation, by Representative Mitch Needelman (R-Palm Bay) repeals provisions passed during the 2003 Legislative Session that allowed certain high school students to graduate with fewer credit hours. The Senate companion is **SB 256, by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach)**. Neither bill was heard in committee.

HB 217, Retirement Credit/Nonqualified Service, by Representative Shelley Vana (D-West Palm Beach) provides the purchase of retirement credit for nonqualified service. The Identical Senate Bill is **SB 240, by Senator Jeffery Atwater (R-North Palm Beach)**. Both bills were referred to committee but never placed on agenda.

HB 241, Postsecondary Student Fees/Migrants, by Representative Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) provides an exemption for dependent children of migrant farm workers from payment of nonresident tuition and out-of-state fees. The bill was never heard in committee. The Senate companion is **SB 1182 by Senator Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton)** remains in the Education Appropriations subcommittee.

HB 341, Student Financial Assistance, by Representative Dick Kravitz (R-Orange Park) prohibits state universities and community colleges from providing financial aid to certain foreign students. The bill is moving through the House, however, the Senate companion, **SB 1724 by Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)** has not been heard in committee.

HB 483, Per Diem and Travel Expenses by Representative Lorraine Ausley (D-Tallahassee) increases the per diem and travel expense ranges for public employees. The bill was not heard in committee. The Senate companion, **SB 1904 by Senator Al Lawson (D-Tallahassee, Alumnus)** is in the General Government Appropriations subcommittee.

HB 663, Retiree Health Insurance/FRS, by Representative Suzanne Kosmas (D-New Smyrna Beach) increases the monthly benefit amount of health insurance subsidy payment for retirees of the PEORP program. The Senate companion is **SB 2204 by Senator Al Lawson (D-Tallahassee, Alumnus)**. Neither bill has been heard in committee.

HB 885 FRS and DROP by Representative Mike Davis (R-Naples) revises the time limitations on rehiring certain community college, state university and Florida School for Deaf and Blind employees and extends participation in DROP for K-20 employees receiving administrative authorization. The Senate companion is **SB 1556 by Senator Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Pembroke Pines)**. Neither bill has been heard in committee.

We have two hectic days left in the session, several bills of interest still have a chance to pass. Those include:

HB 327, University Buildings/Designations by Representative Lorraine Ausley (D-Tallahassee). The House bill was amended in the Senate and is now back in House messages.

HB 487, Local Government Prompt Pay Act by Representative Ron Reagan (R-Sarasota) revises provisions for timely payment for purchases of construction services and revises deadlines for payment of subcontractors, sub-subcontractors, materialmen, & suppliers on construction contracts for public projects. **The bill is on the House calendar today, the Senate companion, SB 544 by Senator Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton)** is also on the House calendar today.

SB 340, School Code Rewrite Corrections, by Senator Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs), includes the State University System Glitch items including UMIFA passed the Legislature and will be sent to the Governor for final approval.

HB 303 Community College/Baccalaureate, by Representative Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall (D-Miami), re-designates specified community colleges and provides authority to and requirements of board of trustees of community college authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees. The bill is available for the House calendar. The Senate companion, **SB 2388, by Senator Ken Pruitt (R-Port St. Lucie)** is in House messages.

SB 2884, Higher Education Finance, by Senator Lisa Carlton (R-Osprey), revises eligibility criteria for Fla. Bright Futures Scholarship Program; awards incentive funds to state universities; requires university boards of trustees to provide students with billing statement that reflects true cost of student's education; creates Florida-Scripps Research Compact; and, creates FSU Center for Performing Arts direct-support organization. The bill is in messages to the House. The House companion, **HB 1781, by Representative Bev Kilmer, (R-Marianna)** is in the Appropriations committee.

HB 1159, Leon County Civic Ctr., Representative Lorraine Ausley (D-Tallahassee) Should be on its way to the Governor today.

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Autism Program: Level funded the FSU request of \$816,666 with recurring dollars.

Student Financial Aid: Restored the \$19.7 million cut.

New Space: Funds \$9.1 million in the SUS base for new space, \$1.8 million designated for FSU.

Public Broadcasting: Level funded the Florida Channel at \$1,600,000, WFSU at \$557,675 and public radio at \$106,614.

Enhancement Funds: FSU received in the base budget \$8 million in non-recurring dollars for university enhancements.



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