

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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Education was not a focal point during the second week of the 2005 Legislative Session. Even so, a few bills of interest received a passing glance last week (**see Spotlight on Bills**) and, more importantly, the Senate released their proposed budget draft.

While the Terri Schiavo case consumed most of the media and legislative attention, the Senate Education Appropriations Committee released the first draft of the 2005-2006 Budget. Their \$2.97 billion proposal for state universities, while a bit better than the Governor's recommendations, points out that much work has yet to be done in the weeks ahead (**see related story**).

Presidents Wetherell and Machen had productive meetings with key legislators last week on issues relating to governance, tuition, budget and salaries.

This week, the third of the session, will be shortened because of the Easter holiday, but intense nonetheless. **House Bill 1001** relating to university governance will go to the House floor for debate (and a likely vote) on Tuesday and should be on its way to the Senate next week. The House Education Appropriations Subcommittee is expected to release its 2005-2006 budget draft today. In addition, several bills that would affect FSU and the SUS are on House committee agendas for hearings this week.

Only 8 days remain until FSU Day at the Capitol. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, March 29 and come join in the garnet and gold festivities.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you need information about, or copies of legislation, or other issues of interest. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or by e-mail at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

Kathleen

Budget Update

Senate subcommittees released their proposed 2005-2006 budget bills late last week. Their funding of enrollment growth is higher than what the Governor recommended, but their \$2.97 billion plan for the state's universities reflects little increase over last year's spending. Salary increases are not addressed and no PECO dollars are included yet. So there's much work to be done in the weeks ahead. Indications are that more revenue will potentially be available after revenue estimating conference amounts are tabulated in early April. The House is expected to release its draft budget today. Below are the highlights of the Senate Education Budget:

- SUS Enrollment Growth—\$37 million (about \$3.7 million for FSU)
- Tuition—Mandatory 5% increase for in-state students, with flexibility by the Boards of Trustees to increase out-of-state and graduate tuition up to 5%
- SUS Challenge Grant Program—\$44.5 million
- FSU Medical School—\$3.3 million
- SUS Centers of Excellence—\$1 million

Spotlight on Bills

SPOTLIGHT ON BILLS—UPDATE
HB 1001, Governance of the State University System by Representative Dudley Goodlette (R-Naples) passed the House Fiscal Council on Friday and is now on the Calendar for vote by the full House. There is no Senate Companion at this time.

SPOTLIGHT ON BILLS
SB 1060, Nursing Shortage by Senator Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey), revises criteria for receiving funds under the Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program and requires that nurses employed as faculty in approved nursing programs be given priority in receiving funds under the program. The bill further requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules requiring nursing applicants & licensees to submit certain information concerning employment & education. The bill was amended and passed the Health Care Committee and is now in the Education Committee. The House is working on a proposed committee bill.

PCB PKT 0501, Education, by the House Pre K-12 Committee, is one of four House bills to address the Governor's A++ proposal. The bill contains language that codifies the establishment and activities of the "Just Read, Florida!" Office including; periodic review of teacher certification exams to ensure exams measure necessary skills for research-based reading instruction, and ensures integration of reading instruction strategies into teacher programs. Additionally, the bill contains language that codifies the

Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) in statute. The Center is currently housed at Florida State University. The Committee workshopped the bill last week, but no votes were taken. **SB 2480, Education, by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach)** contains language relating to the FCRR. However, the Senate language is very different in that it requires students reading below a certain level to enroll in intensive reading programs designed by the FCRR. Additionally, the bill creates the FCRR and houses the Center at the FSU Learning Systems Institute. The bill further defines the responsibilities of the Center. The Senate bill will be heard this afternoon in the Education Committee.

SB 778, Per Diem & Travel Expenses, by Senator Al Lawson (D-Tallahassee, FSU Alumnus) increases the rate at which travelers on State of Florida business will be reimbursed for expenses incurred for food, lodging and mileage. The bill will be heard in the Government Oversight & Productivity Committee on Tuesday. A similar bill in the House, **HB 221 by Representative Lorraine Ausley (D-Tallahassee)** was amended last week and reported favorably out of the House Governmental Operations Committee.

HB 45, Sunshine Security Act, by Representative Mitch Needelman, (R-Palm Bay), creates the "Law Enforcement Agency Consolidation Task Force," charging it with responsibility to study the effects of con-

solidating all sworn law enforcement functions in the state and provide preliminary and final reports of its findings. The bill reported out of the Fiscal Council on Friday and is now in the Justice Council. **SB 1772 by Senator Carey Baker (R-Eustis)** is similar and has been referred to the Criminal Justice Governmental Oversight and Productivity and Justice Appropriations Committees but has not yet been heard.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE

Tuesday, March 22

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Wednesday, March 23

1:00 p.m. until completion

HOUSE

Tuesday, March 22

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon



OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Kathleen M. Daly
Assistant Vice President

Toni Moore
Senior Administrative Assistant

Chris Adcock
Office Manager

(850) 644-4453
www.fsu.edu/~govrel