



The 2000 session got a little hotter last week, as some major issues came to a boil. For the State University System, the temperature rose with the news of an apparent move toward the elimination of the state Board of Regents and the restructuring of the SUS's governance (**see related story**).

The \$50.2 billion state budget was debated and amended on the House and Senate floors last week. Both chambers will take a final vote on their respective budget bills this Tuesday. Conferees will then be appointed and the conference process will probably begin on Friday (**see related budget story**).

The Capitol was also the setting for rallies and protests last week. The nursing home association is taking on the attorneys asking legislators to require lawsuits that allege shoddy health care be filed under the state's medical malpractice law, rather than the Resident's Rights Act. There is talk of a special session on this issue and the regular session hasn't even ended yet. Vacation cruise line workers also staged a protest last week, rallying against a bill that would tax cruise passengers who depart from the Port of Miami; this tax is earmarked to pay for a new major-league baseball stadium in Miami.

As to local issues, a bill to eventually name the field at Doak Campbell Stadium after current head football coach Bobby Bowden passed the Senate Education Committee last week. The bill, sponsored by **Senator Pat Thomas (Democrat-Quincy)**, now moves to the Senate floor for final approval.

This week marks the mid-way point of the 2000 session. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail, at **kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu**, or by phone at **644-4453**, should you have questions about the budget or other legislation. As always, I welcome your comments and concerns. Information is also available at the Online Sunshine Web site - the official Internet site for the Florida Legislature - at **www.leg.state.fl.us**

LEGISLATION WOULD ELIMINATE BOR

Citing the passage of a 1998 constitutional amendment that streamlines the state Cabinet, House Speaker John Thrasher, Senate President Toni Jennings, Education Commissioner Tom Gallagher and Lt. Governor Frank Brogan all endorsed a proposal last week that would abolish the state Board of Regents and replace it with local boards at each of the ten state universities.

Under this proposal, the Governor, beginning in 2003, would appoint a Board of Trustees to each university, which would have the authority to choose that school's president. The presidents would report to their Trustees, as well as to a chancellor who answers to a "mega-board" of education; the latter would oversee all of Florida's state-funded schools, from kindergarten through college. There are clearly some significant differences between the House and Senate proposals on this matter: the Senate bill has 140 pages; the House bill has 17. But there is certainly agreement between the House Speaker and Senate President on the revisionist intent of this legislation.

Board of Regents Chancellor Adam Herbert, in a statement released last Friday, asked for a thoughtful, in-depth discussion on this issue before any proposal to modify the state's governing structure on education is adopted. "We must not destroy a vital engine that is currently one of Florida's strongest, most significant assets," Herbert said, adding that he welcomes the opportunity for further discussion.

BUDGET MOVING TOWARD CONFERENCE

With passage of the House and Senate budgets tomorrow, each chamber's budget conferees will be appointed and the conference process will begin, most likely on Friday. There are currently vast differences between the House and the Senate budget proposals. Below are a few examples:

*CHALLENGE GRANTS:	HOUSE: \$44,296,818 SENATE: \$27,380,000
*MARKET EQUITY:	HOUSE: \$0 SENATE: \$6,029,165
*ENROLLMENT:	HOUSE: \$53,792,020 SENATE: \$28,896,704
*ENHANCEMENTS:	HOUSE: \$0 SENATE: \$18,800,000

Also, the House reduces the operating budget for excess carry-forward by \$19.7 million, the Senate by \$2 million. The House budget contains approximately \$45-million for a medical school and basic sciences program at FSU; the Senate budget has no dollars currently listed for these proposals.



Spotlight on Bills

Bobby Bowden Field

SB 2316 by Senator Pat Thomas (D-Quincy) passed the Senate Education Committee last week by a unanimous vote. This bill would name Florida State's football field "Bobby Bowden Field at Doak S. Campbell Stadium", and would go into effect the day after the Coach retires. The bill has no House companion.

Linkage Institutes

HB 825 by Representative Chris Hart (R-Tampa, FSU alum) will be heard in the House Committee on Education Innovation on **Monday, April 3**. This bill would move linkage institutes from under the Department of Education and would house them under the Department of State.

Student Discipline

HB 1883 by Representative Willie Logan (D-Opa Locka) is scheduled to be heard in the House Colleges and Universities Committee on **Monday, April 3**. The bill addresses disciplinary rules, providing penalties for offenses, which would be graded as minor, moderate or serious. A separate task force has been appointed by the Board of Regents and is currently working with students on this issue. There is an agreement that the bill will not be considered any further this session, but the task force will continue to meet and work on the issue for the next legislative session. The Senate companion, **SB 2116 by Senator Ron Klein (D-Delray Beach)**, has been introduced but not heard in any committee.

UPDATE:

Rulemaking Authority within the State University System: SB 2062 by Senator Jim Horne (R-Orange Park, FSU alum), unanimously passed the Senate Education Committee last Thursday and is now in Rules and Calendar. The comparable House bill, **HB 1567**, is still waiting to be heard in the Finance and Taxation Committee.

Trust Fund for Major Gifts: HB 2035 by Rep. Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs) is scheduled to be heard **Monday, April 3**, in the Colleges & Universities Committee. The Senate companion, **CS/SB 2092 by Senator Donald Sullivan (R-St. Petersburg)**, has not yet been heard in committee.

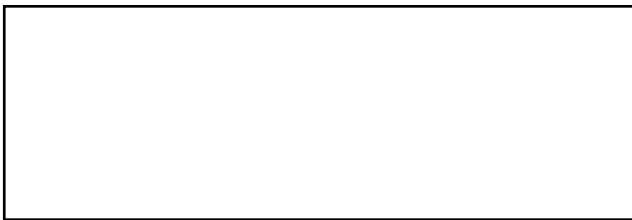
Debit and Credit Cards: CS/HB 525 by Representative Leslie Waters (R-Largo, FSU Alum) passed unanimously out of the House Colleges and Universities Committee last week and is now on second reading. The bill has student support.

Direct Support Organizations: HB 505 passed favorably out of the Governmental Operations Committee and will next be placed on the General House Calendar.

OF NOTE:

The Senate Education Committee will consider and confirm the appointment of five new regents on **Monday, April 3**. The appointees are Thomas F. Petway, III of Jacksonville, Adolfo Henriques of Coral Gables, J. Collier Merrill of Pensacola, James Corbin of Chattahoochee, and Ashley B. Moody, of Gainesville. Ms. Moody, who attends the University of Florida, is the new student regent.

SESSION SCHEDULE			
April 3 -7, 2000			
SENATE		HOUSE	
Tuesday, April 4	9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Tuesday, April 4	9:20 a.m - 2:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 5	9:00 a.m - 12:00 Noon	Thursday, April 6	8:50 a.m. - 12:00 Noon
Thursday, April 6	9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.		



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