



LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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Governance and the budget largely dominated the discussions pertaining to the SUS last week, the fourth of the 2007 Session.

Both the House and Senate higher education committees released first drafts of their Governance proposals. Each committee held a brief discussion of their respective 200+ page bill, took little to no public testimony, and then passed their bills along to the next committees of reference, where these documents are expected to receive a more comprehensive review (**see related story**).

Other bills of interest (**see Spotlight on Bills**) also received hearings in the House and Senate higher-ed committees last week. (These committees, by the way, do not intend to meet again this session, although council and budget committees are scheduled to continue to meet for a few more weeks.)

General education budgets, meanwhile, did pass education-appropriation subcommittees and full budget committees last week in both the House and Senate. These bills are now ready to be heard on the floor of their respective chambers and can expect to be amended. No changes were made to FSU's priority budget projects, which were outlined in last week's LegisLetter.

This week is expected to be a relatively quiet one due to the Passover and Easter holidays. The Senate appears to be taking the entire week off while the House is only scheduled to meet in council committees on Wednesday and Thursday. No full sessions are scheduled to take place on the floor of either chamber. Consequently, next Monday's LegisLetter can be expected to be rather brief. There will be plenty of activity to report on within the next few weeks, however, as each legislative chamber passes their budget plans for the coming year and debates the substantial number of non-budget bills before them.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns about issues that may interest you. As always, I welcome your comments. You can reach me at **(850) 644-4453** or via e-mail at **kdaly@mailers.fsu.edu**.



State University System Governance

Both the House and the Senate discussed University Governance proposals last week in committee. The proposals are very similar and amend and repeal existing language to bring statutory authority into conformity with constitutional directives.

The bills transfer responsibilities from the Board of Regents, the State Board of Education, or the Commissioner of Education, to the Board of Governors in the following areas:

- Issues related to public employment, including retirement programs; ethics; personnel; collective bargaining; and state agency policies;
- Funding, including budget review and approvals; bond finance, issuance of revenue certificates; trust funds, such as administration of the Capital Improvement Fee Trust Fund; and allowable expenditure of funds;
- Facilities, including inventories of development and maintenance of state university facilities; approval of construction projects; encouragement of multiple use of facilities; and joint use of facility approval;
- Purchasing and procurement, including competitive bidding and alternate procedures for bidding;
- Accounting, including rulemaking regarding financial records and statements, and supervision over audits of state universities;
- Tuition and fees, including resident status for tuition purposes for state university students; and
- Miscellaneous issues specific to higher education, including authority related to centers and institutes; collegiate license plates; accommodation for disabled persons; faculty practice plans and self-insurance programs; research and development authority designation; gender equity in sports; new program approval criteria; foreign language credits and competence; sponsored research contract certification; and education assistance programs.

The proposals further define the relationship between the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education as well as clarify organizational issues and rulemaking authority of the Board of Governors and Boards of Trustees.

These proposals will be heard and amended in committees in both Houses during the remaining weeks of the Legislative Session.

Spotlight on Bills

HB 1507—Tuition Rates at Community Colleges & Universities, by Representative Thad Altman, (R – Melbourne), was amended last week to reduce the additional percent of tuition a student must pay on credit hours taken in excess of 120 percent of graduation requirements from 75 percent to 50 percent. The bill reported favorably out of the Postsecondary Education Committee and is awaiting hearing in the Schools and Learning Council. The Senate companion, **SB 2862 by Senator Lee Constantine (R – Altamonte Springs)** has been referred to the Higher Education and Higher Education Appropriations Committees.

SB 420—State Retirement Programs by Senator Al Lawson (D – Tallahassee, FSU Alum), revises conditions for membership in the State Community College System Optional Retirement Program and in the State University System Optional Retirement Program. The bill authorizes the transfer of funds for specified earned credit between FRS and such optional retirement program, and authorizes transfer of membership between the State University System Optional Retirement Program & the FRS. The bill passed the Governmental Operations Committee and is now in the General Government Appropriations Committee. The House companion, **HB 685 by Representative David Simmons (R – Altamonte Springs)** has been referred to the Schools & Learning and the Policy and Budget Councils.

SB 2120—Infant Mortality by Senator Arthenia Joyner (D- Tampa), provides legislative intent relating to black infant health practice initiative and requires local community to develop a team to serve as part of a statewide practice collaborative. The bill requires healthy start coalitions to conduct case reviews and requires certain public universities or colleges to provide technical assistance and to assist in determining certain criteria and to present findings and make recommendations. The bill includes a \$1,000,000 appropriation. The bill reported favorably out of the Health Policy Committee and is now in Health and Human Services

Appropriations Committee. The identical bill in the House, **HB 1269 by Representative Betty Reed (D – Tampa)** is awaiting hearing in the Healthcare Council.

Update on Bills

HB 287— First Generation Matching Grant by Representative Anitere Flores (R – Miami), was amended in the Committee on Postsecondary Education that conforms language relating to eligibility requirements; restores current match provisions; changes the date to reallocate remaining unmatched funds; conforms duties and reporting requirements of institutions with those of other state administered programs; permits use of an award in summer term if funds are available and student attends institution that provided the award; provides a definition of summer term enrollment; permits funds to be carried forward at the end of the fiscal year to be used to provide grants to returning and new awardees; and, permits FRAG-eligible colleges or universities to participate in the First Generation Matching Grant Program if separate and earmarked funds are appropriated by the Legislature. The bill reported favorably out of the Postsecondary Education Committee and is awaiting hearing in the Schools and Learning Council.

CS HB 289— Textbook Affordability by Representative Anitere Flores (R – Miami), the bill was amended to remove the sales tax exemption for required or recommended textbooks. The amendment also increases the time required for universities to report required textbooks from 15 days to 45 days and extends the time period for the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors to adopt policies, procedures and guidelines to further efforts to minimize the cost of textbooks. The bill is awaiting hearing in the Policy and Budget Council.

SB 1710— State University Student Fees, by Senator Steve Oelrich (R – Gainesville, FSU Alum), authorizes the Board of Governors to delegate authority to establish certain fees for academic enhancement to the board of trustees at the University of Florida. The bill was amended in the Higher Education Committee this week to include only the University of Florida, to exempt those students who hold a pre-paid tuition contract and allows the full \$500.00 fee to be charged by the year 2012.

CS HB 721—Sales Tax/Postsecondary Bookstore by Representative Bill Proctor (R – St. Augustine, FSU Alum), exempts payments to postsecondary educational institutions made by certain bookstore operators and provides for retroactive application. The bill was amended to clarify that retroactive application does not provide for refunds of paid taxes. It passed out of the Schools & Learning Council and is awaiting hearing in the Policy and Budget Council later this week.

SB 644— State Universities/Buildings/ Naming by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R – Ormond Beach), provides for facilities of a state university to be named for a living person in accordance with rules of the Board of Governors of the State University System and authorizes the university board of trustees to name building in accordance with specified provision. The bill reported unfavorably in the Higher Education Committee last week and is pending reconsideration.

SB 1222—Student Financial Assistance by Senator Jeremy Ring (D – Margate), creates the Sure Futures Postgraduate Scholarship Program to match private sector businesses that need employees who have advanced degrees with students who are seeking advanced degrees and employment. The bill passed out of the Higher Education Committee last week and is awaiting hearing in the Commerce Committee.



Office of

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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SESSION SCHEDULE

There will be no formal Sessions this week in observance of the Passover and Easter Holidays.

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