

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Volume Twelve / Number Six • February 25, 2002

Policy took a back seat to politics last week, the fifth of the legislative session.

The education budget in the Senate continued to be the big sticking point between the House and Senate spending plans. **Senator Don Sullivan (R - St. Petersburg)**, Chairman of the Senate Education Appropriations Committee, filled his spending plan with \$500 million from additional proposed local property taxes last week, even though the Senate President had not approved such a proposal and Speaker Feeney will not support the idea. Nonetheless, the budget passed the subcommittee and will be heard by the full Senate Ways and Means Committee this Thursday. As such, the Senate's education budget looks much better on paper, but the money used to fund enrollment and enhancements for the universities does not currently exist. Meanwhile, the House plan passed the full Appropriations Committee last Friday and will be heard by the full House this Friday (**see related story**).

As the budget battle continues to smolder, the tax reform fight appears to be in its final stages. For the first time in 25 years, the House of Representatives met as a "Committee on the Whole" to debate, and ultimately defeat, a replica of Senator **John McKay's** tax reform measure. The full House took the entire day last Wednesday to discuss the merits, and demerits, of tax reform in Florida. In the end, the House voted 99-0 to kill the replicate Senate proposal.

Not coincidentally, the budget, the tax-reform issue and reapportionment are all, at this point in the session, interrelated. Consequently, not much of substance has been accomplished thus far.

The Senate Education Committee, without fanfare or much discussion, will confirm the members of our Board of Trustees this afternoon. The full Senate must approve the appointments later in the session.

Some might argue that every day in Tallahassee is FSU day. But **Tuesday, March 5** has been officially designated as **FSU Day at the Capitol**. We will feature displays in the rotunda of the Capitol from 10:00 until 2:00, and the Pep Band and Circus will perform during lunch in the Capitol Courtyard. As always, we will honor our legislative alum with a ceremony around noontime in the courtyard. I welcome you to attend this garnet and golden day.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about issues that may concern you. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or by e-mail **kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu**. As always, I welcome your comments and value your participation in the process.

Kathleen

Higher Education Funding Workgroup

Last week, FBOE Secretary Jim Horne appointed the Higher Education Funding Workgroup, which will develop comprehensive recommendations on postsecondary funding. The 18-member panel includes President Sandy D'Alemberte. The workgroup is charged with reviewing current state funding, student fee levels, and the availability of financial aid to facilitate access to postsecondary education. Among the significant issues to be studied is the idea of providing total flexibility to university boards by allowing them to use student fees and appropriate tuition to meet the growth needs of the institutions. Also to be determined: the need for additional access to education by expanding the offering of 4-year degrees at community colleges; expanding the access at existing universities; and, consideration of the value of distance education. The findings are to be completed by July 15, 2002.

Budget Update

The Senate Education Appropriations Committee mocked up a spending plan last week that includes the possibility of additional revenue from a yet to be approved increase in local property taxes. This plan passed and is on its way to the full Ways and Means panel on Thursday. As a result, this plan is much more appealing than the original version, but it is based on funding that does not yet exist. Meanwhile, the House, which is advancing their solid education plan to the floor this week, is awaiting the latest revenue estimates, which will be announced on March 8. In the final analysis, the budget process has a long way to go before it is complete. Below are comparisons between the House and the Senate budgets, as they stand today.

House Budget

Tuition Increase: Includes a 5 percent across -the- board increase, and gives the UBOTs the authority to increase up to an additional 5 percent each for graduate and out-of-state students.

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Enrollment: Funded at approximately 42 percent of the SUS average for student services, university support and academic administration; 10,455 additional FTE system-wide for \$78 million.

FSU Medical School: Funded the requested rollout needed for 2002-03 - \$5.7 million- including tuition and fee revenue.

Local Incentives: Provides \$23 million in discretionary funding, giving the UBOTs the spending flexibility.

Senate Budget

Tuition Increase: Includes a 5 percent across-the-board increase and a 10 percent increase for out-of-state and graduate students. The UBOTs may implement a tuition and fee schedule that exceeds these 10 percent increases.

Enrollment: Funded at approximately 20 percent of the SUS average for student services, university support and academic administration; funds 12,525 additional FTE for \$79 million. Other portions of the formula are funded at 100 percent of the SUS average.

FSU Medical School: Funds \$4.2 million of the requested rollout, including tuition and fee revenue.

Local Incentives: Provides \$27 million in discretionary funding, providing the UBOTs spending flexibility.

Both implementing bills include language allowing universities to utilize the state accounting system for 2002-03 without being charged a fee. Both bills also allow the UBOTs to waive student fees.

SESSION SCHEDULE

HOUSE

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

1:30 - 5:00 PM

Friday, March 1, 2002

10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

1:30 - 5:00 PM

SENATE

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

Thursday, February 28, 2002

1:30 - 4:30 PM



CS/HB 915, Public Schools/In God We Trust Motto by Council for Lifelong Learning and Representative Mike Hogan (R-Jacksonville) allows schools to prominently display the motto "IN GOD WE TRUST," effective upon becoming law. The bill passed both of its committees of reference and is now on the House calendar. A similar Senate bill, **SB 926 by Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)** has been introduced but not heard by a committee.

SB 1584, Educational Facilities by Senator Alex Villalobos (R-Miami, FSU Alum) revises certain functions of the DOE, particularly addressing statutes pertaining to building and safety code compliance as well as those addressing purchasing issues and use of facilities. The bill is scheduled to be heard by the Education Committee today.

UPDATE

SB 332, Athlete Agents by Senator Jim King (R- Jacksonville, FSU Alum), passed the Senate last week and is now in House messages. The bill defines more broadly the term "athlete agent," redefines licensure and contract requirements,

improves the civil remedies violations of regulations, and creates a reciprocity clause with other participating states. The House companion, **HB 179 by Representative Holly Benson (R- Pensacola)** passed its first two committees of reference and will be heard tomorrow in the House Council for Smarter Government.

HB 465, Military Children/Residency/Tuition by Representative Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala, FSU Alum) allows the dependent children of active duty military personnel to be classified as Florida residents for tuition purposes. The bill is now on second reading in the House. The identical Senate bill, **SB 534 by Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)** is currently stalled in the Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

HB 871, Meningitis Immunization/Schools by Representative Mike Hogan (R-Jacksonville), passed the House Colleges and Universities Committee last week as a committee substitute. It is scheduled to be heard this week by the Council for Healthy Communities. The bill would require college students who live on-campus to be vaccinated for meningococcal meningitis. The Health Department, in coordination with the

Department of Education, would set up the vaccination program. A comparable bill, **SB 1628 by Senator Ken Pruitt (R-Port St. Lucie),** was heard by the Senate Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Committee and passed as a committee substitute. The Senate Education Committee will next hear the bill.

CS/CS/HB 1275, Florida Bright Futures Scholarship by Representative Marco Rubio (R-Miami), was unanimously passed by the House Education Appropriations Committee last week. It addresses the testing for Florida Bright Futures Scholars and does not require universities and community colleges to pay for the CLEP tests. There is currently no Senate companion bill.

HB 1241, Education and Training/State Employees by Representative Loranne Ausley (D-Tallahassee) passed its last committee of reference last week, the House Council for Lifelong Learning, as a committee substitute. The bill would allow non-university state employees to take up to six semester hours tuition free. A similar Senate bill, **SB 1356 by Senator Al Lawson (D-Tallahassee, FSU alum),** has passed the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Productivity.