



# LegisLetter

## FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Volume Nine / Number Six • April 7, 2003

Six weeks down, three more to go, in the timetable of a standard Legislative Session. For 2003, however, as someone remarked this week, the House and Senate, while located only 140 feet from each other in the Capitol, may as well be 140 miles apart.

Both chambers amended and debated their budgets late last week, but the differences are vast, not only in dollar amounts and allocations, but in philosophy, as well (**see related story**). Not many bills of substance are moving either. Major issues still unresolved this session include the clean indoor-air act (the bill that implements the no-smoking constitutional amendment), medical malpractice, workers' compensation reform, the Bright Futures scholarship and pre-paid tuition adjustments, and the higher education school-code "glitch" proposals, to name just a few.

Florida State University was in the statewide spotlight twice last week. First, there was coverage of our seventh annual, and very successful, "FSU Day at the Capitol" celebration last Wednesday. Thousands attended this event, and the consensus is that this was our best FSU Day yet (**see photo collage**). And on Friday, President Wetherell, along with UF President Charles Young, announced to the Legislature an innovative proposal for funding our institutions during the upcoming, and subsequent, fiscal years (**see related story**).

Please remember to inform me if you are contacted to testify at the Capitol, or participate in any way. You can e-mail me at [kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu](mailto:kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu), call me at (850) 644-4453, or go to the Governmental Relations website, (linked to the FSU home page) fill out the legislative-contact form and e-mail it back to me. I appreciate you keeping me informed of your activities. And as always, please feel free to contact me if you have questions about issues that concern you.

*Kathleen*

## HOUSE AND SENATE BUDGET COMPARISONS

The House passed its \$52 billion "family friendly" budget on Friday, putting it on a collision course with the Senate's plan, which, as of Thursday, included \$1.4 billion in unspecified new-revenue enhancements.

An option to enhancing the state's revenue pool was proposed by **Senator Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D.-Wesson)** last week, in the form of a statewide impact fee on new construction. Currently, only 16 counties in Florida charge such a fee. Wasserman-Schultz' proposal would expand this fee to all counties, and broaden it to include real-estate closings on existing structures. In a move to counter this proposal, **House Speaker Johnnie Byrd (R. Plant City)** called for an unusual House procedure, whereby the full House, referred to as a "Committee on the Whole," will be asked to kill the Senate's proposal. (Byrd wants to put the House Republicans on record as being against the fee, in an effort to show that he alone isn't thwarting any budget agreement.) "It appears that we are heading for a massive train wreck," said House Democratic leader, **Representative Doug Wiles, (D. St. Augustine)**.

The Senate's budget proposal, and its yet-to-be-enacted revenue enhancements, would buy back the currently proposed \$36 million in cuts to the State University System; fund \$34.3 million in SUS enrollment growth; add \$26 million to the Challenge Grant pot; fund \$10 million for additional Centers of Excellence; fund the Bright Futures Scholarship Program; and allow for a 7.5 percent tuition increase for in-state undergrads, as well as up to 10 percent more for all other students. In addition, this Senate proposal funds nearly all of FSU's priority PECO projects, and provides for a 2.5 percent raise for state employees.

The House budget, meanwhile, in its current form, decouples the Bright Futures Scholarship Program from tuition, and allows state universities to raise tuition up to 12.5 percent for all levels. Enrollment growth remains unfunded, and an almost \$80 million cut in General Revenue for the SUS is sustained. Their budget also has nothing allocated for the Challenge Grant Program, and only \$800,000 for two Panama City campus projects on its FSU PECO list. In addition, the House plan caps university presidents' salaries at \$225,000 of state funds.

# FSU Day at the Capitol 2003



# Spotlight on Bills

**HB 19 — Dignity for all Students Act by Representative Ken Gottlieb, (D-Miramar)** Creates “The Dignity for All Students Act” and offers legislative results regarding harassment, discrimination and violence in Florida schools. Prohibits the stated conduct and details actions of punishment and requires character-development program curriculum to include information regarding harassment, discrimination and violence, etc. The Senate has filed the companion bill, **SB 1498 by Senator Gwen Margolis (D-Miami)**.

**SB 302 — Unemployment Compensation/Births/Adoptions, by Senator Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-Pembroke Pines)** Prohibits the refusal of unemployment compensation benefits for leaves of absence relating to birthing a baby or adopting a minor child; allows for reductions in the amount of compensation; obligates employers to post certain notices; defines specific payments as not chargeable against employers; obligates the director of the Workforce Innovation Agency to report to the Governor and Legislature. There is no House companion.

**HB 31 — Student Financial Assistance, by Representative Dick Kravitz (R-Orange Park)** Prevents state funds from being used to grant financial assistance to post-secondary education students

who are citizens of countries identified by the US Department of State as participating in terrorist activities. Requires the funds instead be used for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. The House bill will be heard in the full K-20 Committee today. The Senate has filed the companion bill, **SB 1760 by Senator Stephen Wise (R-Jacksonville)**, which has not yet been heard.

**SB 2136 — Admissions Deposit, by Senator Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-Wesson)** Authorizes each university board of trustees to establish a \$200.00 deposit upon admission to a state university. The deposit would be credited to the student upon arrival. If the student opts not to attend, the deposit would be nonrefundable. The bill passed the Senate Education Committee last week and is now awaiting a hearing in Senate Education Appropriations. The House has a similar bill, **HB 619 by Representative Lorraine Ausley (D-Tallahassee)**. Rep. Ausley’s bill is incorporated into the Higher Education Fiscal Policy Committee bill, which is moving through the K-20 Committee.

**SB 2242— Charter Schools, by Senator Daniel Webster (R-Winter Garden)** Entitles state uni-

versities or community colleges to sponsor a charter school, with specific accountability measures. The bill amends the application requirements and requires fiscal projections in the charter application. After substantial amendments, this bill passed the Senate Education Committee last week. The House companion bill, which will be heard in the full K-20 Committee today, is **HB 1279 by Representative Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala, FSU Alum)**.

**HB 83— FRS/Instructional Personnel/DROP, by Representative Fred Brummer (R-Apopka)** Expands the period of time those members of the Florida Retirement System who are employed as instructional personnel in grades K-12 may partake in DROP. Both the House and Senate have filed similar bills.

**SB 2738— Public Health, by Senator Burt Saunders (R-Naples)** Allows for the funds from the tobacco settlement is given to the Biomedical Trust Fund within the Health Services Department and the Community Health Resources and Health Awareness and Tobacco Division. Allows for the environmental health services to incorporate investigations of elevated blood lead levels; redrafts the duties of the Health Department relating to injury prevention and control; entitles state agencies to form employee health and wellness programs. Similar bills have been filed in both the House and Senate.

## FSU and UF Join Forces to Propose New Legislative Funding Plan

Last week, Florida State University and the University of Florida called upon the state Legislature to consider a five-year pilot program in which the state would provide funding to the two universities through contracts to educate a specified number of students each year.

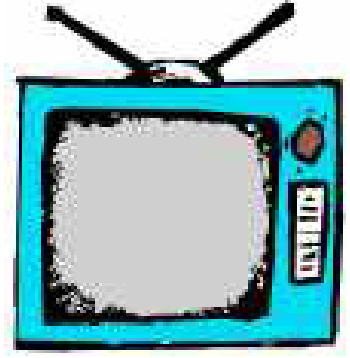
“The Legislature has asked the universities to come up with creative solutions to the state’s tight budget situation,” Wetherell said. “This proposal offers a positive way for the universities to increase efficiency and improve our financial planning. Our students and the taxpayers are the winners in this plan because it ensures that all of our student’s tuition dollars are returned to them through the universities. At the same time, this proposal lets the Legislature focus on general revenue and allows the two universities to deal with tuition and fees.”

The board of trustees at each university would set tuition and fees. The proposal calls for no tuition increase for in-state undergraduate students for the first year of the plan.

Under the plan, both universities would remain fully public but would attain “state-related” status, similar to entities such as Enterprise Florida or Workforce Florida. Both universities would remain accountable to the Legislature, governor and each university’s board of trustees through annual performance reviews.

Additionally, FSU and UF will be measured annually through the K-20 accountability report that applies to universities. The report includes measures for each university’s enrollment plan and graduation rates.

A bonus within the proposal provides guaranteed job offers for teaching and nursing graduates or the universities will refund full tuition to their in-state graduates who do not get an offer in those fields.



### SESSION SCHEDULE

#### SENATE

Tuesday, April 8  
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Thursday, April 10  
9:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

#### HOUSE

Tuesday, April 8  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Thursday, April 10  
1:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

### Television Coverage

Live and taped coverage of daily legislative sessions and committee meetings will be broadcast gavel-to-gavel on the Florida Channel, 24 hours a day, Monday through Sunday.

Check your local paper or cable company for channel listings.



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