



The 1998 Legislative Session formally opens tomorrow, **March 3**, but in reality, it began last month. House and Senate leaders pledged to have their respective budgets ready for a vote by the second week of the session. Consequently, the usual pre-budget frenzy typical for March actually started in January this year. As a result, it appears as though state legislators will have budgets to deliberate by the week of March 9th.

The overall budget picture looks good this year, due to a strong economy and the \$11 billion tobacco settlement. The Governor released his \$42 billion budget recommendations in early January. He dedicates 53.5 percent of statewide general revenue dollars to education funding, which results in a \$624.2 million increase (7.07%) over last year's expenditures (see related story).

Because this is an election year, legislators won't be in the mood to raise taxes. I will predict, however they will work to complete their business within the 60 day regular session time frame, or maybe less! On a lighter note, we are finalizing our plans for another FSU Day at the Capitol on **March 16**. It will be a day of honoring our legislative alumni while featuring our magnificent institution of higher learning. In short, it will be a "garnet and golden" day!

As always, I welcome your comments, questions and concerns, and value your insight and knowledge. You can reach me at **644-4453** or e-mail kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

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Capitol Update Connects Viewers to Florida Legislature

Capitol Update, a new, live half-hour news program, will premiere statewide at 5:30 p.m. EST on Monday, March 2, 1998. Airing daily on Sunshine Network, the Florida Channel and Florida's public television affiliates for the duration of the regular legislative session, *Capitol Update* seeks to explain and analyze each day's most significant legislative developments. The first episode of the series will feature a preview of the 1998 Legislative session.

The telecast of *Capitol Update* on Sunshine Network, public television and the Florida Channel, a service of WFSU-TV, marks the inception of an historic partnership between a regional cable network and public broadcasting. "We are pleased that, because of this partnership, the citizens of Florida will be brought closer to their government," said Patrick Keating, General Manager of the Florida State University's WFSU-TV.

Capitol Update is designed to move at a faster pace than most legislative coverage—using brief and carefully edited video packages, live reports and graphic elements—while offering clear, concise reports on the impact of bills being debated by members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Senior Producer Lee Mainella said of the program, "I am truly excited about the challenge and the opportunity to launch a new concept in legislative news coverage."

Beth Switzer, Executive Producer of the Florida Channel, explained, "Our mission on *Capitol Update* is to offer viewers a dynamic program that brings balance, energy and depth to the reporting of issues debated by the Florida Legislature—a program that will help viewers increase their awareness and understanding of issues that affect the quality of their lives."

Source: Florida Channel Press Release,
Audra Perry

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The only action the Legislature is constitutionally required to take during the 60-day session is to pass an annual balanced budget. The budget process and its outcome is of equal importance to us at Florida State University. Both the Governor and the State University System have made their budget recommendations to the Legislature, who are currently working on their own budgets. The following is a summary of both the Governor's and State University System's budget recommendations:

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

- * General Revenue funding for Education increased by \$624.2 million above FY 1997-98 expenditures, an increase of 7.07%.
- * Recommended funding for the SUS in FY 1998-99 totals \$2 billion.
- * \$19 million is recommended in administered funds to implement the state salary increase in the SUS.
- * Provides an additional \$30.6 million to cover enrollment growth of 3,084 FTE students.
- * Increases in tuition by 6.58% and earmarks 55% of the revenue for need-based financial aid and other student issues.
- * Allocates \$8 million for campus safety and security.
- * Provides \$5.2 million to enhance and improve undergraduate and graduate education.
- * Provides a total of \$33.4 million for the SUS Challenge Grant Program and \$6 million for the SUS Matching Partnership Program.
- * Allocates \$11 million tobacco settlement proceeds to the SUS.
- * Increases performance incentives by \$5 million, for a total of \$8.3 million.
- * Provides \$1.8 million for Distance Education programs and administration.

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Provides an additional \$23.1 million to cover enrollment growth of 5,871 FTE students.
- * \$39.6 million for enrollment growth specials, including the development of a 3-year degree program at **Florida State University**.
- * There is a 3.63% increase in salary enhancements: Faculty \$32 million, A&P/USPS \$17 million, and Graduate Assistants \$1.7 million.
- * A tuition increase of approximately 6.58% to maintain the 25%-75% balance. An additional proposal includes a 5% differential tuition increase for Florida State University's College of Law.
- * \$33.3 million for the Challenge Grant Program, and \$6 million for Matching Partnerships.
- * Provides \$4.2 million to cover the replacement of the current existing communications system used by state university police agencies, with a new advanced 800 Mhz communication system.
- * Provides \$21 million for Distance Learning programs and administration.

Session Schedule: March 3-6, 1998

Senate:

Tuesday, March 3
Joint Session
10:00 am
11:00am

Thursday, March 5
2:15 pm-4:00 pm

House:

Tuesday, March 3
Joint Session
10:20 am-11:00am
11:00am

Wednesday, March 4
8:30am-12:00pm

Friday, March 6
8:30am-12:00pm

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