



Volume **22** | Number **4** | **March 23, 2015**

House and Senate budget proposals were released last week with the House recommending a \$76.2 billion allocation for FY 2015-2016 and the Senate proposing \$80.4 billion. Both chambers began their budget-crafting with projected surpluses of more than \$1 billion, but the primary difference in spending plans is due to the Senate proposal including federal Low Income Pool (LIP) funds – which essentially provide hospitals with subsidies for the cost of treating low-income and uninsured patients – as well as a provision (CS/SB 7044) to accept federal dollars to extend healthcare to 800,000 Floridians.

The House proposes a 4.2% increase over last year's higher education base budget, while the Senate suggests a 3.7% increase. Please see the related story for a breakdown of these differences. Both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will meet all day on Wednesday to amend and approve their respective proposals, then send them on to their respective chambers for hearings next week.

Bills repealing the ban on concealed weapons on state college and university campuses also had hearings in the House and Senate education committees last week. While the Senate bill (SB 178) passed along party lines, the House version (HB 4007) had two Democrats voting in favor, one being the member representing Florida State University, Michelle Rehwinkel-Vasilinda.

This fourth week of the nine-week session will see SB 938, which pertains to postsecondary affordability, receive its first hearing of the session in the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill exempts textbooks at public and non-public postsecondary institutions from sales taxes, among other provisions. Further information on this and other bills moving through the process is in the **Spotlight on Bills** section of this newsletter.

Along with the hustle and bustle of the legislative process, last week was also a celebratory one for Florida State. FSU Day at the Capitol was a huge success with staffers at more than 60 displays on three floors of the capitol interacting with hundreds of individuals. The courtyard presentations were also met with an enthusiastic crowd that included lots of alumni legislators and friends and recognition of our national champions women's soccer team. A recap and photos of the festivities are included in this newsletter.

The official investiture of Florida State University's 15th president, John Thrasher, also took place last week. This formal ceremony included the Board of Trustees, local elected officials, and Governor Scott. Legislative friends and President Thrasher's family members were also present. The elegant and memorable event included the presentation of the requisite Presidential medal, with the entire ceremony providing a high point to an active, productive and noteworthy week in Florida State history.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you would like copies of bills and their analyses, or have questions about issues of concern. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or **kdaly@fsu.edu**.

Kathleen



Seminole Spirit Fills the Capitol

Last Tuesday, the capitol rocked garnet and gold during FSU Day at the Capitol. Special thanks go out to those who took time from their busy schedules to share the accomplishments of their departments and programs with the legislative community.

Thanks also go out to Tom Block who served as emcee for the noontime activities in the capitol courtyard. Joining Tom was the Seminole Sound, FSU cheerleaders and Flying High Circus performers, who entertained the crowd, along with Coach Sue Semrau, members of the women's basketball team who are currently competing in the NCAA tournament and Coach Mark Krikorian and members of the National Championship soccer team who were presented their championship rings during the lunchtime program.

The festivities actually started the night before with "A Seminole

Evening" reception on the 22nd floor of the capitol hosted by the Student Government Association. State lawmakers, legislative staff, alumni and supporters gathered with students and other members of the campus community to talk and learn while the sun set over FSU's campus in the distance.

These special events would not have been possible, of course, without the support of our generous sponsors:

Classic Fare Catering by Aramark
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Coca Cola Bottling of Tallahassee
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Pictures of the festivities will be posted to the Governmental Relations website – govrel.fsu.edu – later this week.

Higher Education Budget Comparison

House and Senate Committees released their budgets last week, thereby setting up the annual debate over each chamber's spending priorities. The House recommends a budget of \$76.2 billion for FY 2015-2016, which is below the \$77 billion plan Governor Scott proposed.

Meanwhile, the Senate budget proposal totals \$80.4 billion, which would be the largest in state history, largely due to its inclusion of funding for healthcare expansions. The House budget provides a 4.2% increase over last year's higher education base, while the Senate currently offers a 3.7% increase. Primary to their differences is the Senate proposing to cut recurring and non-recurring projects funded in previous budgets.

Below is a side-by-side comparison of aspects the House and Senate higher education budget proposals:

Budget Item (Entity)	House Proposal	Senate Proposal
Performance Funds (SUS)	\$100 million	\$200 million
Plant, Operations & Maintenance (SUS)	\$2,448,189	\$2,448,189
Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (SB 7030)	\$0	\$5 million
Preeminence Supplement (FSU)	\$5 million	\$0
Florida Campus Compact (FSU)	\$350,000	\$200,000
Claude Pepper Center (FSU)	(Same as FY2014-2015)	\$250,000 reduction

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
and Florida State University of Engineering from General Revenue Fund 12,997,476

Senate Proviso -- From the funds in Specific Appropriation 138A, \$12,997,476 is provided to the FAMU-FSU Joint College of Engineering. The Joint College Governance Council is established and comprised of the Presidents (or their designees), the provosts, the Vice Presidents for Research, and the Chief Financial Officers of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and Florida State University. The Dean of the Joint College of Engineering and two student representatives, appointed by the respective Student Government Association presidents of the two universities, are included as ex-officio non-voting members. The Chancellor of the State University System (or designee) is included as a voting member of the council.

Communication/Autism Navigator \$1,353,292

Senate Proviso -- Funds provided in Specific Appropriation 107 for Communication/Autism Navigator shall be awarded to Florida State University College of Medicine for statewide implementation of an exceptional student education communication/autism navigator that includes cores strategies and interventions through the Early Steps Program to increase the number of full integration placements of exceptional students into the standard classroom.

SPOTLIGHT ON **BILLS**

SB 7026, State Group Insurance Program by Senator Jeremy Ring (D – Margate), requires the Department of Management Services (DMS) to ensure that each contracted health maintenance organization (HMO) within the state group insurance program provides to covered members under the age of 21 reasonable access to covered medical services within 3 months of the request for early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment requirements.

The bill sets forth contractual requirements between the DMS and HMOs and specifies grievance or complaint procedures. Each HMO is required to submit quarterly reporting to the DMS regarding grievances or complaints. The DMS is required to establish financial consequences and fines if the network adequacy, timely referral and the reasonable access provisions of this bill are not met. The bill reported favorably by the Banking and Insurance Committee last week and is now in the Appropriations Committee. There is no House Companion at this time.

SB 7030 – Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities by Senator Don Gaetz (R – Destin), establishes mechanisms for the approval of unique postsecondary education programs tailored to the needs of students with intellectual disabilities and statewide coordination of information. Specifically, the bill includes two key components:

- A process through which postsecondary institutions in Florida can voluntarily seek approval to offer a Florida

Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP) for students with intellectual disabilities; and

- A Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (statewide coordinating center) for statewide coordination of information regarding programs and services for students with disabilities and their parents.

While the FPCTPs are designed to serve as a postsecondary education program option for students with intellectual disabilities, the statewide coordinating center is designed to serve a broader group of students with disabilities and their parents. To assist with the implementation of FPCTPs and statewide coordination of information, the bill establishes requirements for students to enroll in an FPCTP and receive state financial assistance in the form of an FPCTP Scholarship, requirements for institutions to offer FPCTPs, and duties and responsibilities for the statewide coordinating center to implement the bill's provisions.

The bill creates the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities and assigns the center with specific responsibilities. The bill also creates the FPCTP Scholarship with a maximum allowable award which will be as specified annually in the General Appropriations Act. The specific appropriation for these programs will be determined by the Legislature in the General Appropriations Act.

The bill reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee last week and is now waiting to be heard by the full Senate. A similar bill in the

House, **HB 7091 by Representative Elizabeth Porter (R – Lake City, FSU Alum)**, is in the Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

SB 960 – Florida Bright Futures Scholarship by Senator Tom Lee (R – Brandon), modifies student community service requirements affecting student eligibility for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program awards by clarifying that community service work means volunteer service work, expanding the permissible activities that students can participate in to meet the volunteer service work requirement, and placing parameters on such activities. Specifically, the bill:

- Expands service work areas beyond social areas of interest to include a civic issue or a professional area of interest.
- Requires a student to develop a plan for personal involvement in addressing the social or civic issue or learning about the professional area, as well as reflecting on such experience through papers or presentations.
- Provides accountability requirements for a student's service work.
- Prohibits a student from receiving compensation or academic credit for the volunteer service work.

Additionally, the bill specifies that volunteer service work may include, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Internship with a business or government entity;

- Work for a nonprofit community service organization; or
- Activity on behalf of a candidate for public office.

The volunteer service hours must be documented in writing and signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization where the student volunteered.

The bill reported favorably by the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education last week and is now in the Fiscal Policy Committee. A comparable bill in the House, **HB 747 by Representative Patrick Rooney (R – Palm Beach Gardens)** reported favorably by the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee last week.

SB 130—Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center by Senator Alan Hays (R – Umatilla), requires the State Board of Administration to transfer a portion of the investment income from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund to the Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center. The transfer is to begin during the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The amount transferred for each fiscal year is to be the lesser of \$1 million or 35 percent of the fund's investment income minus \$10 million, based on the fund's most recent fiscal year-end audit. The amount transferred must be used for the center's statutory purpose of supporting the state's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from catastrophic storms. The bill reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee last week and is now waiting to be heard by the full Senate. The identical bill in the House, **HB 53 by Representative Doug Broxson (R – Milton)** is now in the Government Operations Appropriations Subcommittee.

HB 719 – Florida State Employees' Charitable Campaign by Representative Bob Cortes (R – Maitland), allows state officers and employees to contribute undesignated funds

to the FSECC as part of a campaign event. It directs the fiscal agent to direct undesignated contributions to participating charitable organizations in proportion to all designated FSECC contributions received by that organization. The bill eliminates the requirement that local steering committees be established in each fiscal agent area. It also eliminates the additional eligibility requirements for an independent unaffiliated agency, national agency, and international service agency.

The bill reported favorably by the Government Operation Appropriations Subcommittee last week and is not in the State Affairs Committee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 694 by Senator Jeremy Ring (D – Margate)** is now in the Fiscal Policy Committee.

CS/HB 19 – School Safety by Representative Greg Steube (R – Sarasota), allows school superintendents, upon approval of the district school board, to create a school safety designee program through which the school superintendent may designate one or more individuals to carry a concealed weapon or firearm on school property. Weapons or firearms may only be carried in a concealed manner and must be on the individual's person at all times while performing official school duties. The bill requires school safety designees to possess a concealed weapon license. Specifically the bill:

- Establishes criteria and training requirements which school safety designees must meet. The bill also requires a level 2 background screening for school safety designees who have not already had a level 2 background screening by the school board and authorizes each school superintendent to require additional background screenings for all school safety designees.
- Requires district school board policies and procedures for emergencies and emergency

drills to include active shooters and hostage situations. Active-shooter situation procedures for each school must be developed in consultation with a local law enforcement agency.

- Requires each district school superintendent to provide recommendations to improve school safety and security to the first responding local law enforcement agencies.
- Requires school districts and private schools to allow first-responding law enforcement agencies to tour the school campuses once every three years. Any recommendations relating to school safety and emergency issues based on a campus tour must be documented by the district or private school.
- Specifies that a district school board may commission one or more school safety officers on each school campus.
- Specifies that the required training will be created and defined by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, which are administered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

The bill reported favorably by the Appropriations Committee last week. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 180 by Senator Greg Evers (R – Pensacola)** will be heard in the Criminal Justice Committee this afternoon.

UPDATE ON BILLS

CS/SB 824 – Public Private Partnerships by Senator Greg Evers (R – Pensacola), implements many of the recommendations of the statutorily created Partnership for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Act Guidelines Task Force to create a uniform, improved process for engaging in public-private partnerships (P3s) across the state.

The bill was amended last week to require a solicitation to include a design criteria package prepared by an architect or engineer licensed in Florida that is sufficient to allow private entities to prepare a bid or a response to the solicitation. The bill provides a number of performance-based criteria that must be included in the design criteria package. The amended bill reported favorably by the Community Affairs Committee last week and is now in the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee. A comparable in the House, **HB 65 by Representative Greg Steube (R – Sarasota)** is in the Government Affairs Subcommittee.

SB 938 – Postsecondary Education Accountability by Senator Anitere Flores (R – Miami), exempts textbooks required for a course offered by a public or nonpublic postsecondary educational institution from the sales and use tax. Additionally, the bill requires the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to identify strategies and initiatives to reduce the cost of higher education and prohibits Universities Boards of Trustees from recommending graduate and professional program tuition increases. The bill prohibits resident tuition at a Florida College System institution from exceeding a specified amount per credit hour and prohibits resident undergraduate

tuition at a state university from exceeding a specified amount per credit hour, etc. The bill will have its first hearing this afternoon in the Higher Education Committee. While there is no House companion at this time, there is a draft bill being developed in the House Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee.

HB 4005 -- Concealed Weapons or Firearms by Representative Greg Stuebe (R – Sarasota), repeals s. 790.06(12)(a)13., F.S. As a result, those with a valid concealed weapons or concealed firearms license will be allowed to carry a concealed weapon or concealed firearm into any college or university facility. The bill reported favorably by the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee last week and is now in the Judiciary Committee, its last committee of reference before being available to be heard by the full House. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 176 by Senator Greg Evers (R – Pensacola)** reported favorably in the Higher Education Committee last week and is now in the Judiciary Committee. It will have one more stop, the Rules Committee before being available to be heard by the full Senate.

CS/CS/SB182 -- Public Records and Meetings/Postsecondary Education Executive Search by Senator Alan Hays (R – Umatilla), creates exemptions from

Florida's public records and open meetings laws for any identifying information of an applicant for state university or Florida College System (FCS) institution president, provost, or dean. The bill provides that identifying information of an applicant is exempt from public records requirements. The bill also closes meetings where applicants and potential applicants are discussed. Meetings held for the purpose of establishing the qualifications of potential applicants or formulating the compensation framework to be offered to applicants will continue to be public. No later than 30 days before a final action or vote is taken on hiring finalists, information and meetings related to the finalists will be subject to public records and open meetings laws.

As required by the Open Government Sunset Review Act, the bill provides for repeal of the exemptions on October 2, 2020, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

The bill was amended by the Government Oversight and Accountability Committee and was **temporarily postponed by the Rules Committee last week. This action slows the process and makes passage of this provision much more difficult this session.** A similar bill in the House, **HB 223 by Representative Neil Combee (R – Auburndale)** is now in the Governmental Operations Subcommittee.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION

TUESDAY, **MARCH 24**, 10:00 a.m.
to 12:00 noon

HOUSE SESSION

THURSDAY, **MARCH 26**, 3:30 p.m. until completion
FRIDAY, **MARCH 27**, 10:00 a.m. until completion



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