

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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General Revenue Estimates Update

Altogether, the Revenue Estimating Conference reduced its General Revenue forecast by \$956.3 million for this year and the next. Projected collections for Fiscal

Year 2006-07 were revised downwards by \$303.4 million or about 1.1% below the last estimate. For Fiscal Year 2007-08, expected revenues were decreased by \$652.9 million or

2.3% from the earlier forecast.

The new revenue forecast for Fiscal Year 2006-07 contains a lower level of projected collections than the prior fiscal year. However, modest growth is expected to resume in Fiscal Year 2007-08, ending 2.6% above Fiscal Year 2006-07. The revisions to the forecast are primarily attributable to the stronger than expected downturn in the housing market. While the state's forecast mirrors the national outlook in significant ways, the heightened level of speculative activity and second-home buying in Florida made it particularly vulnerable to the widely anticipated real-estate market slowdown. Continued strength in the underlying Florida economy, along with population-driven revenue increases and higher levels of personal income, bolster the rest of the estimate.

Budget Update

Last week the House Schools and Learning Council rolled out the first education budget run for the 2007 Session. At this juncture, the Council took a very conservative approach to next year's spending plan. It is anticipated they will come out with a more complete budget later this week, as will the Senate.

However, the following is a comparison of the Board of Governors, Governor and the House recommendations as of last week:

	Board of Governors	Governor	House
Enrollment	\$ 150,802,883	\$101,223,500	\$ 35,100,000
Tuition Increase	0	0	5 %
Major Gifts	74,336,964	45,000,000	22,500,000
FSU Medical School - recurring			
Daytona Beach	1,438,932	0	1,438, 932
Immokalee	967,337	0	967,337
Physical Plant	\$ 7,713,000	7,713,000	7,713,000
SUS Autism (includes FSU)		7,518,000	7,518,000
Public Broadcasting		\$ 11,937,414	\$11,825,469

Property tax reform, teacher pay, and overall revenue (or the lack thereof) were the primary topics during the second week of this nine-week session.

The House Policy and Budget Council approved a bill on Friday that would double the \$25,000 homestead exemption for Florida homeowners. The bill now moves to the full House for debate. (The Senate, meanwhile, has not yet addressed this issue.) If such a bill should pass both chambers and obtain the Governor's signature, Florida citizens will have the opportunity to vote on the proposal since homestead exemption is a provision in the state constitution.

Also last week, legislators received updated revenue projections from the Revenue Estimating Conference. The news was not good; nearly \$1 billion less than what was previously projected is expected for next year. Consequently, the House's revised spending plan for education looks, at first glance at least, to be less than spectacular (see related story), and is forcing its Education Appropriations Committee to meet this week to reconfigure their original numbers. And while the Senate has not yet released their first budget offerings, it is expected that both chambers will move their respective budgets through committees and on to the floor

within the next two weeks. Stay tuned.

As for substantive bills, several are slowly making their way through the process, although most of the higher education proposals, including those pertaining to governance, excess hours, and a tech and academic-enhancement fees, are still awaiting their first hearings (see Spotlight on Bills).

Finally, the long-awaited FSU Day at the Capitol will take place this Thursday, March 22. We hope to take this event completely over the top with Garnet and Gold! Governor Charlie Crist and Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp, both FSU grads, will attend the capitol courtyard ceremony at noon. Accompanying them will be current legislators who are FSU alums, President Wetherell, Gene Deckerhoff, the Pep Band and cheerleaders, and a number of our esteemed football coaches. Come on out and join the fun!

As always, I welcome your comments, questions and insights. Please feel free to contact me at (850) 644-4453 or at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

Kathleen

FSU Day at the Capitol

After months of planning the day has come for us put on our Garnet and Gold and show off the best of Florida State University.

Please join us **Thursday, March 22**, for a day filled with informative displays in the plaza level and second floor rotunda of the Capitol from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

We will enjoy performances by the Pep Band, cheerleaders and the Flying High Circus during the lunch hour in the courtyard beginning at **11:30 a.m.** President Wetherell and Gene Deckerhoff will recognize our alumni in the Legislature at **12:15 p.m.** on the steps of the Historic Capitol and introduce our football coaching staff to the Seminole faithful. Refreshments will be available for all to enjoy.

Mark your calendars now! We look forward to seeing you in your Garnet and Gold on **Thursday, March 22nd.**

Spotlight on Bills

SB 2012— University Medical Education, by Senator Steve Oelrich (R – Gainesville, FSU Alum), declares the right of the university boards of trustees to intervene in civil action for alleged medical negligence by an affiliated hospital. Transfers certain responsibilities relating to liability insurance from the State Board of Education to the Board of Governors. The bill authorizes specified agents and employees of the self-insurance program adopted by the board to discuss patient care information without violating patient privacy or confidentiality. The bill was temporarily passed in the Senate Higher Education Committee on Friday and will be considered for a vote in the same committee on Wednesday. The House companion, **HB 911, by Representative Bill Proctor (R St. Augustine, FSU Alum)** has been referred to Committee on Constitution & Civil Law.

SB 228— Bright Futures Scholarship Program, by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R – Ormond Beach), authorizes students to use the award from the Bright Futures Scholarship Program for enrollment in the summer term. Additionally, the bill authorizes DOE to reserve the student's award if it is possible for the student to raise his or her grade point average during summer term. The bill reported out of the Higher Education Committee last week and is awaiting hearing in the Higher Education Appropriations Committee. The identical bill in the House, **HB 1067 by Representative Pat Patterson (R – DeLand)** has been referred to the Committee on Postsecondary Education.

SB 254— Sales Tax/On-campus Bookstore Books by Senator Stephen Wise (R – Jacksonville), provides exemption from sales, use, and other transactions tax for textbooks sold at on-campus bookstores of public postsecondary institutions. The bill was amended to clarify that the exemption is only for degree seeking students

with proper identification. It passed out of the Higher Education Committee last week. Similar bills in both the House and Senate include: HB 215 by Representative Marty Coley (R – Marianna, FSU Alum), which has been referred to the Committee on Postsecondary Education, and, HB 0289 by Representative Anitere Flores (R – Miami), **SB 1456 By Senator Dan Webster (R – Winter Garden)** and SB 2492 by Senator Mike Haridopolis (R – Melbourne) which were discussed during the Revenue Impact Conference on Saturday.

HB 207— Community College Student Fees by Representative Charles Chestnut (D – Gainesville), authorizes community college boards of trustees to establish transportation user fees. The bill limits such fees to the cost of services provided and allows fines to exceed cost of services provided and to apply to persons other than those receiving specified services. The bill passed out of the Committee on Postsecondary Education and will next be heard in the Schools and Learning Council this week. The Senate companion, **SB 684 by Senator Steve Oelrich (R – Gainesville, FSU Alum)**, passed out of the Higher Education Committee and is awaiting hearing in the Higher Education Appropriations Committee.

HB 1287— Florida Research Commercialization Program by Representative Dennis Ross (R – Lakeland), creates the Florida Research Commercialization Matching Grant Program and provides for the establishment of a statewide advisory committee. The bill provides applicant eligibility requirements and provides for a selection committee and requirements for selection process and awards of grants. Additionally, the bill requires the program to assist in commercialization transitions and establishes a program participant database. The bill was heard in the Economic Development Committee on Friday. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 2378 by Senator Burt Saunders (R – Naples)** has been referred to the Commerce, Governmental Operations and, Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations committees.

HB 1521, HB 1523, HB 1525, HB 1527, HB 1529, and HB 1531, Sure Ventures Programs by Representative Gayle Harrell (R – Port St. Lucie), creates and provides legislative intent for the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program. The bills create the Sure Ventures Commercialization Grant Program and the SURE Venture Capital Act. The proposals require Enterprise Florida, Inc., to facilitate the establishment of the SURE Venture Capital Fund. Additionally, the bills create the Institute for Commercialization of Public Research and include an appropriation of \$13,000,000. The bills will be heard in the Economic Development Committee

today. Additionally, **SB 2414, SB 2416, SB 2418, SB 2420, SB 2422, SB 2424 and SB 2426 by Senator Jeremy Ring (D – Margate)**, will be heard in the Higher Education and Commerce committees this week.

SB 1956— Underage Drinking by Senator Tony Hill (D – Jacksonville), requires the completion of a responsible-vendor training program for all employees, all managers, and certain licensees who sell, prepare, dispense, serve, or otherwise deliver alcoholic beverages during the course of employment. The bill provides that the program may be conducted by a vendor or approved and certified responsible-vendor training provider and requires Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Division to approve and certify providers of said training. The bill has been referred to the Regulated Industries, Higher Education, Finance and Tax and, General Government Appropriations committees. The House companion, **HB 1541 by Representative Andy Gardiner (R – Apopka)** has been referred to the Committee on Postsecondary Education.

HB 1507— Tuition Rates at Community Colleges & Universities by Representative Thad Altman (R – Melbourne), requires students to pay 75 percent more than the in-state tuition rate for credit hours in excess of the specified number of credit hours required to complete degree program. The bill excludes certain credit hours from calculation as hours required to earn a degree and provides for notification of students by the postsecondary institution. The bill has been referred to the Schools & Learning Council and the Policy & Budget Council. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 2862 by Senator Lee Constantine (R – Altamonte Springs)** has been filed but not yet referred.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION

Wednesday, March 21
9:00, a.m. to 12:00 noon

Thursday, March 22
9:00, a.m. to 12:00 noon

HOUSE SESSION

Wednesday, March 21
1:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m.

Thursday, March 22
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday, March 23
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (if needed)



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