



LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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Surrounded by family and flowers, legislators were spit-shined and ready to go last Tuesday, the opening day of the 2007 Legislative Session. Governor Crist (Republican, FSU Alumnus) set a bi-partisan tone for the next 60 days, delivering a speech that the Democrats could almost identify with. Legislators then quickly went to work. In their zeal, the full Senate met twice last week while their budget committees met to present annual-continuation budgets as they await allocation estimates this week. The House Policy and Budget Council, meanwhile, met all day Friday to discuss legislation that would propose a doubling of the homestead exemption, which would then be sent to the ballot for Florida citizens to vote on next year. **(See Spotlight on Bills).**

President Wetherell and UF President Machen participated in their annual joint Seminole and Gator caucus meeting last week. Over 30 members of the Legislature, all graduates of either FSU or UF, met to discuss issues important to both universities. Pathways of Excellence funding, technology fee authorization, passage of an enhancement fee, full funding of the university's PECO lists and full funding of the Major Gifts Program were all discussed.

The Revenue Estimating Conference, made up of a panel of revenue experts, meets today to determine the amount of state revenue available for legislators to spend during the coming fiscal year. Indications are that a significant downward trend in projected recurring general revenues will be revealed today. A full reporting of the '07-08 fiscal scenario will appear in next week's *Legisletter*. **(See related story).**

You can catch all of the exciting action on WFSU, local cable channel 4, from 8:00 am to 6:00 p.m. every day. And if that's too much like watching paint dry, please feel free to contact me for copies of bills, their analyses, or with any questions/concerns you might have. I can be reached at (850) 644-4453 or via e-mail at kdaly@mailers.fsu.edu.

Kathleen

Revenue Estimates Fall Short

The Governor released his \$71 billion budget recommendations a couple weeks ago, which was \$2.4 billion less than the current year's budget. The revenue estimating conference will meet today to re-evaluate the estimated funds that will be available to meet the state's needs over the next fiscal year. In November, the conference met to set guidelines for this year. However, early indicators show even greater shortfalls in general revenue than first predicted.

Net GR collections for January were \$126.7 million under the November 2006 estimate and \$179 million under estimate for the 2006-2007 fiscal year to date.

On the other hand, the estimates for PECO are up by \$252.9 million over the November predictions. This should translate to an additional \$70 million in revenue for the State University System to spend on priority facilities projects.

A complete review of the fiscal picture for this session will appear in next week's *Legisletter*.

Television Coverage of the Legislature

Live and taped coverage of all the activities of the Legislature can be seen on The Florida Channel, which is available in Leon and Wakulla counties from midnight to 6:00 p.m. daily on FSU4 (local cable channel 4). The Florida Channel is fed by satellite 24 hours a day to cable outlets throughout Florida.

For more information, see WFSU.org.

Spotlight on Bills

CS SB 1490— Retirement/Payroll Contribution Rate, by the Governmental Operations Committee, increases the employer payroll contribution rates for membership classes of Fla. Retirement System for state fiscal years effective July 1, 2007, & July 1, 2008. The bill passed out of the Governmental Operations committee last week and is pending review under senate rule. A similar bill, **SB 1426, by Senator Lisa Carlton (R – Osprey)** has been introduced in the General Government Appropriations Committee.

SB 1190— Postsecondary Credit Articulation, by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R – Ormond Beach), strengthens policies and practices that promote the progression and transfer of students among and between educational institutions. Additionally, the bill provides for the Legislature to establish policies and budget actions applicable to state postsecondary institutions and provides for examination of statewide articulation policies & budget actions. The bill has been referred to the Higher Education and Higher Education Appropriations committees. There is no House companion at this time.

HB 451— Teacher Preparation Program, by Representative Bill Proctor (R – St. Augustine, FSU Alum), specifies a uniform core curriculum for all persons majoring in education to be adopted by the State Board of Education. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Postsecondary Education. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 1214 by Senator Stephen Wise (R – Jacksonville)**, has been referred to Higher Education, Education Pre-K – 12 and Higher Education Appropriations committees.

SB 1326— University Concurrency TF/DOE, by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R – Ormond Beach), recreates the university concurrency trust fund within the Department of Education without modification and carries forward current balances and continues current

sources and uses thereof. Additionally, the bill abrogates provisions regarding the termination of the trust fund. The bill has passed out of the Higher Education Appropriations committee and is awaiting a hearing of the full Senate.

HB 159 — Law Enforcement Salary Incentives, by Representative Mary Brandenburg (D – Lake Worth), increases amounts of specified salary incentives for full-time law enforcement officers. The bill has been referred to the Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 678 by Senator Stephen Wise (R – Jacksonville)**, has been referred to the Criminal Justice, Governmental Operations and General Government Appropriations committees.

SB 750—Biomedical Research, by Senator Steven Geller (D – Hallandale Beach, FSU Alum), revises uses for funds credited to the Biomedical Research Trust Fund and creates the Florida Better Quality of Life and Biomedical Research Act. The bill creates the Stem Cell Research Advisory Council and creates the Biomedical Ethics Advisory Council to regulate research procedures and enforce ethical guidelines. Additionally, the bill provides for a grants-in-aid program for the purpose of conducting embryonic, amniotic, or human adult stem cell research. The bill has been referred to the Health Policy, Commerce, Higher Education, Criminal Justice, and Health and Human Services Appropriations committees. A similar bill in the House, **HB 555, by Representative Franklin Sands (D – Weston)**, has been referred to the Committee on Health Quality.

SB 556—Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners, by Senator Burt Saunders (R – Naples), redefines the term “practitioner” to include advanced registered nurse practitioners and authorizes said practitioner to prescribe certain controlled substances under certain circumstances. The bill has been referred to the Health Regulation and Health and Human Services Appropriations committees. The identical bill in the House, **HB 1263 by Representative Luis Garcia (D - Miami)** has been introduced but not yet referred to any committees.

HB 419—Lodging & Food Service Establishments, by Representative Jimmy Patronis (R – Panama City, FSU Alum), revises membership provisions of the Department of Business and professional Regulation’s Hotels &

Restaurants’ Division advisory council and revises the Hospitality Education Program. The bill deletes language allowing the program to affiliate with Florida State University and other specified institutions. The bill replaces the director of education with the division as the administrator of program. Additionally, the bill revises provisions relating to the administration of the program and specifies how funds collected under the program shall be expended. The bill passed out of the Committee on Business Regulation and is now in the Jobs & Entrepreneurship Council. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 2484 by Senator Mike Haridopolis (R – Melbourne)** has been file, but has not yet been referred to any committees.

HB 1453—Education, by Representative Frank Attkisson (R – Kissimmee), provides for assistance in program planning from the Department of Education for all nonpublic postsecondary institutions and requires public and nonpublic postsecondary educational institutions that are accredited and participate in financial assistance programs to participate in the statewide course numbering system. The bill requires faculty credentials to meet the requirements of the Department of Education and authorizes DOE to impose administrative fines. The bill has been introduced but not yet referred to any committees for a hearing. The identical bill, **SB 2444 by Senator Stephen Wise (R – Jacksonville)** has been filed in the Senate.



Office of

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION

No Session scheduled

HOUSE SESSION

Thursday, March 15, 2007,
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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