



LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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Legislators opened their 60-day session on Tuesday with the usual flowers, family and fanfare all around. The indication, however, is that the 2010 Legislative Session will be anything but typical. In an unprecedented move and within hours of convening, both the House and the Senate passed and sent to the Governor a bill delaying a scheduled increase in unemployment compensation taxes. The Governor signed the bill into law before the end of the day.

Among other topics during the opening week – and sure to be discussed in the weeks to come – are revenue shortfalls and revenue enhancements, class size, job creation, the unemployment rate, teacher quality and pay, state-employee retirement and health-benefit changes (see **Spotlight on Bills**).

Speaker Larry Cretul released the House budget allocations on Thursday, which will enable his chamber to begin work on the 2010-11 budget in earnest this week. State representatives hope to bring their spending plan to the full House by April 1st. Preliminary figures show an approximate decrease in recurring general revenue of **8.4 percent** for higher education, and an approximate **5 percent** decrease in lottery dollars. This would translate to a **6.9 percent** decrease in recurring general revenue for FSU, and a **4.9 percent** decrease in lottery dollars. According to the Speaker, public K-12 schools and the health and human services will be earmarked to receive increases in general revenue. Lawmakers will get the latest forecast on available dollars from the state economists tomorrow, and the Senate will release their budget numbers late next week. Discussions on gaming and oil drilling as revenue enhancements have not been scheduled for formal discussion, but are still options for legislators to consider in the next few weeks.

In his State of the State address last Tuesday evening, Governor Crist referenced New Florida, a plan endorsed by the Board of Governors and the business community in Florida to create an economy based on knowledge and innovation through the state's public universities. The Governor recommended \$100 million in new funding for the SUS to begin implementing this initiative (see **related story**).

You can follow all the live legislative action every day on the Florida Channel, local cable channel 4. And, as always, please feel free to contact me at **kdaly@fsu.edu** or at **(850) 644-4453** with any questions you may have.

NEW FLORIDA

“New Florida” is an initiative created by the Board of Governors to demonstrate how the State University System can help build Florida’s knowledge economy. The intent of this initiative is to create a knowledge and innovation based economy, built on the high-technology, high-wage jobs needed in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (or “STEM”). However, the areas of medicine and health care, finance, insurance, professional services and education are also vital.

What are the benefits? In addition to better jobs with higher average annual salaries, economies built on knowledge and innovation are more stable.

The Board of Governor’s plan will build this new economy by:

- Focusing each university on fulfilling its distinctive mission.
- Creating a strategic research agenda built on the strengths of each institution in the State University System
- Focusing half of the new funding on targeted degrees to meet regional and state needs.
- Using funds for enrollment and other system workload increases and capital construction.
- Increasing attraction of top-level students, researchers and industry.

The plan sets out accountability measures and projected outcomes. To accomplish these goals the Board of Governors

has asked that the Legislature double the investment of state dollars to the State University System. The Governor’s budget recommendations included \$100 million for this initiative.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION

No Session Scheduled

HOUSE SESSION

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

12:00 p.m. to 1:50 p.m.

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

1:00 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.

Spotlight on Bills

SB 2304, Math Sciences Instructional Materials, by Senator Thad Altman (R – Melbourne), creates the Florida Center for World Excellence in Mathematics and Science to provide for the review of mathematics and science instructional materials. The purpose of the Center is to provide for an independent review of mathematics and science instructional materials from around the world to ensure delivery of the best possible instruction in the state's K-12 public schools and to ensure that instructional personnel adopt the most effective teaching strategies. The bill provides that the center shall form advisory panels to make recommendations to the center for mathematics and science instructional materials for the 2011-2012 school year and for school years thereafter. The identical bill in the House, **HB 1223**, by Representative Debbie Mayfield (R – Vero Beach) has been referred to the PreK-12 Policy, State Universities & Private Colleges Policy, State Universities & Private Colleges Appropriations committees and the Education Policy Council.

SB 2442, State University System, by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R – Ormond Beach), revises the powers and duties of the Board of Governors (BOG) relating to accountability. The bill requires the BOG to align the missions of each constituent university with the quality of its students; the national reputation of its faculty and its academic and research programs; the quantity of externally generated research, patents, and licenses; and the strategic and accountability plans. There is no House companion at this time.

SB 2206, Chief Financial Officer/Chart of Accounts, by Senator J.D. Alexander (R – Lake Wales), requires governmental and statutorily created entities to maintain their financial data in accordance with the requirements of the Chief Financial Officer by July 1, 2011. The bill requires the Chief Financial Officer to adopt a chart of accounts that meets certain requirements by January 1, 2013 and provides for a review and update of the chart of accounts. The bill was introduced and referred to the Governmental Oversight and Accountability committees and the Policy and Steering Committee on Ways and Means. There is no House companion at this time.

SB 1096, Middle School Civics Education

Assessment, by Senator Nancy Detert (R – Venice), requires the language arts standards, as revised, to include integration of civics education concepts. Additionally, the bill requires that instructional materials used for language arts and reading instruction include

civics education content at all grade levels, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Middle school students must complete a 1-semester civics education course for promotion from middle school, beginning with students entering grade 6 in the 2012-2013 school year. This course must include the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments; the structures and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; and the meaning and significance of historic documents, such as the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States. The bill is now in Education Pre-K - 12 Appropriations Committee. The House companion, **HB 105**, by Representative Charles McBurney (R – Jacksonville) is on the House Calendar pending review.

SB 1760, Postsecondary Tuition, by Senator John Thrasher (R – Jacksonville, FSU Alum), Cites this act as the "Transparency in Tuition Act." The bill requires the student catalog, application packet, and fee invoice to separately identify tuition and all fees required by each public postsecondary institution. The bill has been introduced and referred to the Higher Education and Higher Education Appropriations committees. There is no House companion at this time.

SB 1960, Talent & Economic Advancement Matching Grant Program, by Senator Mike Bennett (R – Bradenton), establishes the Talent and Economic Advancement Matching Grant Program within the Department of Education to provide businesses in this state with a means of securing world-class talent through partnerships between the state and schools of higher education and businesses in the state to provide greater access to higher education for residents of the state. The bill provides for administration of the program by the Office of Student Financial Assistance. Additionally, the bill authorizes businesses to identify

certain talent needs and partner with certain schools to provide certain educational programs. The bill was introduced and referred to the Higher Education, Military Affairs and Domestic Security, Finance and Tax committees and the Policy and Steering Committee on Ways and Means. The House companion, **HB 1409**, by Representative Chris Dorworth (R – Heathrow) has been introduced.

SB 1924, Preference in Award of State Contracts, by Senator Stephen Wise (R – Jacksonville), expands provisions that authorize an agency, county, municipality, school district, or other political subdivision of the state to provide preferential consideration to a Florida business in awarding competitively bid contracts to purchase personal property under specified circumstances to include the purchase of construction services, etc. The bill was introduced and referred to the Community Affairs, Governmental Oversight and Accountability, General Government Appropriations committees and the Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means. The identical bill in the House, **HB 899**, by Representative Scott Plakon (R – Longwood) was introduced and referred to Governmental Affairs Policy, Government Operations Appropriations, Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council.

HB 1415, Bright Futures Scholarship Program, by Representative John Tobia (R – Melbourne), revises the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program beginning with initial awards to students for the 2011 fall term. The bill provides that, for students receiving initial awards beginning with the 2011 fall term, said scholarship program shall consist of five levels of awards. The bill further provides that the tuition differential shall be included in the calculation of such scholarship program award amounts, etc. The bill has been introduced. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 2642** by Senator Carey Baker (R – Eustis) has been filed.



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Kathleen M. Daly, *Assistant Vice President*

Toni Moore, *Program Coordinator*

Chris Adcock, *Office Administrator*

850.644.4453 www.govrel.fsu.edu