



Volume **20** | Number **1** | **March 4, 2013**

Shortly after lawmakers gavel in tomorrow to convene this year's legislative session, Governor Rick Scott will deliver his State of the State address.

The Governor will reiterate his legislative priorities, which were outlined in the budget recommendations he released last month. These include increased funding for K-12 education and merit pay increases for K-12 teachers.

During the ensuing 60 days of the session, state legislators will also be contemplating bills that would provide all state employees with a pay raise (see Spotlight on Bills).

For the first time in over six years, lawmakers will have a small budget surplus to appropriate. The priorities of Florida State University, meanwhile, include the recapturing of state-funding losses over these years, and a source of replacement revenue for the Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) fund, which had been used to build and maintain the state's education facilities. For the coming fiscal year, this fund has, regrettably, completely dried up.

Another Florida State priority, as you may have heard, is the FSU's proposal to become a National Top 25 Public University, and in doing so also achieve state and national status for student career readiness and job placement.

This Top 25 proposal includes a \$75 million investment from the state in recurring funds allocated over five years (\$15 million per year) and a one-time \$64.8 million investment for advanced teaching laboratories in the Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Science Building.

The Top 25 proposal has been designed to seamlessly align with the University Preeminence bill – legislation quite similar to the proposal passed last year but vetoed by the governor – that is scheduled to be filed for consideration this week.

Like in past years, this Legisletter will be distributed weekly during the coming nine weeks of the session. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, or if you should need copies of bills and their analysis. I can be reached at **kdaly@fsu.edu** or **at (850) 644-4453**.

Kathleen



Dr. Barron Proposes “Top 25” Initiative

President Barron presented a proposal to the legislature and governor designed to elevate Florida State University to a top 25 national ranking among public institutions, and become a state and national leader in student career readiness and job placement.

This Top 25 proposal includes recurring funds of \$15 million per year for five years, for a total investment by the state of \$75 million, and a one-time allocation of \$64.8 million to equip the Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Science Building with advanced teaching laboratories. (Last year, the legislature provided \$3.8 million in planning funds for this facility.)

The university would be required to match this \$75 million investment with new donor bequests directed toward science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), the entrepreneurial-university plan, career-enhancement initiatives, and efforts to increase retention and graduation rates.

Approval of the Top 25 proposal would also elevate Florida State's chances of securing an invitation to the elite American Association of Universities (AAU); currently only one university in Florida is an AAU member.

2013 Legislative Priorities

Each year, Florida State University administrators identify priorities determined to be vital to the operation and growth of the university. For 2013, FSU's legislative priorities include:

1. Support of the Board of Governors' request for \$118 million to the State University System. This investment by the state will be tied to specific accountability goals and includes \$17 million for Florida State. State-budget constraints have resulted in Florida State University losing \$105 million in general revenue since 2007. These cuts have strained the university's resolve to provide high-quality academics and conduct vital research.

2. Support of a proposal for national preeminence. An act to elevate Florida's state universities to national preeminence passed the legislature last year, but was vetoed by the Governor. A similar proposal this year will provide the state's top public research universities the flexibility

– and accountability – to enhance their academics and research, and better compete with other top-tier universities. By aligning the performance standards of Florida's public research universities to those of other nationally recognized institutions, the state will elevate its excellence in higher education.

3. Support of Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO). State universities rely heavily on PECO funds for their construction projects and building maintenance. During the past three years, however, these funds have been dramatically reduced—dropping from more than \$600 million in 2008 to only \$7 million last year, and with no funding projected for 2013. This crucial funding source needs to be replenished or replaced with an alternate means of dedicated funding.

Visit fblog.org to read the Board of Governors' recommendations.

Advocate for Florida State

While the start of the 2013 Legislative Session is scheduled to begin tomorrow, Tuesday, March 5, Florida State University's priorities for the coming fiscal year have been in state lawmakers' hands for a while already.

Higher-education funding, a bill to elevate Florida State's preeminent status, and a proposal that would catapult the university into the top 25 among public universities nationally are among the issues legislators are already contemplating.

Expressing to state officials your support of Florida State – as an alum, friend, faculty member, staffer or student – is vitally important! You are encouraged to utilize the Advocate for Florida State website (advocateforfloridastate.fsu.edu), which conveys your support.

If you have not done so already, please register with the Advocate site at



Advocate for Florida State website.

advocateforfloridastate.fsu.edu. Doing so will also allow the University to more easily keep you updated on issues of importance during the legislative session. While at the site, please take the time to also look over President Barron's message and the university's legislative priorities.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Florida State University.

FSU Day at the Capitol

The annual salute to Florida State's significant contributions to our state will take place on **Tuesday, April 2**, from **10:00 to 2:00**.

FSU Day at the Capitol has become one of the most popular traditions during the legislative session, and provides a wonderful opportunity to showcase our University's programs and accomplishments to our friends in the legislature.

Through this event, Florida State is able to emphasize the University's long and proud heritage, and bring attention to the extraordinary achievements of our students, faculty and staff.

Preceding the day's festivities, a "Seminole Evening" reception will be held on April 1 starting at 5:30 on the 22nd floor of the Capitol. This special event is sponsored by the FSU Student Government Association and all University supporters are welcome to attend.

As always, **FSU Day at the Capitol** will include informative displays, which will be positioned throughout the plaza level and second and third floor rotundas. Also featured will be University "celebrities" – administrators, legislative alumni and more – along with performances by the FSU pep band, cheerleaders and Flying High Circus.

A special celebration of all things FSU will take place in the Capitol courtyard beginning at **11:30** with refreshments available for all to enjoy.

If your department has not yet signed up to display your achievements, please contact Toni Moore in the FSU Governmental Relations office at tmoore@fsu.edu or 644-3847.

SPOTLIGHT ON BILLS

HB 7011 – Florida Retirement System by Representative Jason Brodeur (R – Sanford), makes changes to the FRS, including, but not limited to:

- Closing the pension plan (defined benefit) to new enrollees, and requiring all new enrollees to participate in the investment plan (defined contribution), effective January 1, 2014;
- Eliminating the option for new enrollees to apply for disability benefits, effective January 1, 2014;
- Expanding the investment options available to investment plan members;
- Closing the Senior Management Service Optional Annuity Program to new participants, effective January 1, 2014; and
- Prohibiting elected officials from joining the Senior Management Service Class in lieu of participation in the Elected Officers' Class, effective January 1, 2014.

The bill does not impact the ability of any current FRS enrollee to select participation in the pension plan or the investment plan. Changes included in the bill only pertain to new enrollees initially enrolled in the system on or after January 1, 2014. The bill is in the Appropriations Committee. There is no Senate companion at this time.

HB 11 – Resident Status for Tuition Purposes by Representative Reggie Fullwood (D – Jacksonville), prohibits a dependent child who is a U.S. citizen from being denied classification as resident for tuition purposes based solely upon the citizenship status of a parent. The bill is now in the Higher Education & Workforce Subcommittee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 268 by Senator Joe Abruzzo**

(D – Wellington), has been referred to the Education; Judiciary, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and the Appropriations Committees.

HB 17 – Resident Status for Tuition Purposes by Representative Carlos Trujillo (R – Miami, FSU Alum), provides that a dependent child who is a United States citizen, a lawful permanent resident, or a qualified legal alien whose parent is not a United States citizen, a lawful permanent resident, or a qualified legal alien and who attends a Florida high school for 4 consecutive years and submits his or her high school transcript to and enrolls in an institution of higher education within 12 months after graduating from a Florida high school, shall be classified as a resident for tuition purposes. The bill is now in the Higher Education & Workforce Subcommittee. A similar bill in the Senate **SB 180 by Senator Anitere Flores (R – Miami)** has been referred to the Education, Judiciary, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and Appropriations Committees.

HB 539 – Resident Status for Tuition Purposes by Representative Kathleen Peters (R – St. Petersburg), provides that Veterans of the Armed Services of the United States, including reserve components thereof, who: attend the physical location of an institution of higher learning within the state; or physically reside in this state while enrolled in an online course offered by an institution of higher learning shall be classified as residents for tuition purposes. The bill is now in the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 260 by Senator Jack Latvala (R – Clearwater)** is now in the Education Committee.

HB 289 – State Employee Salaries by Representative Michelle Rehwinkel-Vasilinda (D – Tallahassee), provides that effective July 1, 2013, each state employee is provided a competitive pay adjustment of 7 percent on the employee's June 30, 2013, base rate of pay. The bill is now in the Appropriations Committee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 1180 by Senator Darren Soto (D – Kissimmee)** has been filed.

HB 41 – State Employee Salaries by Representative Dwayne Taylor (D – Daytona Beach), provides that effective July 1, 2013, each state employee is provided a competitive pay adjustment of 2 percent on the employee's June 30, 2013, base rate of pay. The bill is now in the Appropriations Committee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 484 by Senator Arthenia Joyner (D – Tampa)** has been referred to the Governmental Oversight and Accountability, Rules and Appropriations Committees.

SB 70 – Employment Discrimination by Senator Arthenia Joyner (D – Tampa), creates the Helen Gordon Davis Fair Pay Protection Act, relating to equal pay for equal work for women. The bill recognizes the importance of the Department of Economic Opportunity and the Commission on Human Relations in ensuring fair pay, and requires the Department of Economic Opportunity to conduct studies and provide information to employers, labor organizations, and the public concerning the means available to eliminate pay disparities between men and women. Additionally, the bill creates the Governor's Recognition Award for Pay Equity in the Workplace and requires that the award be made annually to businesses in this state

engaged in activities that eliminate the barriers to equal pay for equal work for women. The bill has been referred to the Commerce and Tourism, Governmental Oversight and Accountability, Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development, and Appropriations Committees. The identical bill in the House, **HB 613 by Representative Janet Cruz (D – Tampa)** is now in the Economic Development & Tourism Subcommittee.

SB 84 – Public-private Partnerships by Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla (R – Miami), creates a new section of law to facilitate public-private partnerships, when cost-effective, to construct public-purpose projects. The bill provides legislative findings and intent relating to the construction or improvement by private entities of facilities used predominantly for a public purpose. The bill provides for notice to affected local jurisdictions as well as for comprehensive agreements between a public and a private entity. The bill specifies the requirements for such partnership. The bill lays out the financing sources for certain projects by a private entity. The applicability of sovereign immunity for public entities with respect to qualified projects is provided for in the bill. The bill was amended and passed the Community Affairs Committee and is now in the

Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee. A similar bill in the House, **HB 85 by Representative Greg Steube (R – Sarasota)** is now in the Government Operations Subcommittee.

SB 276 – State University Fee Exemptions by Senator Joe Abruzzo (D – Wellington), provides that a student who has taken an initial semester course in Mandarin or Portuguese at a state university and has received a grade of “B” or higher for the course is exempt from the payment of tuition for each additional course in the same language in which the student is enrolled at a state university. The bill has been referred to the Education, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and, Appropriations Committees. There is no House companion at this time.

HB 303 – Communications Services Tax by Representative James Grant (R – Tampa), revises the communications services tax rate on sales of communications services and deletes provisions that impose communications services tax on retail sale of direct-to-home satellite services. Additionally the bill requires collection and remittance of gross receipts tax on same transactions. The bill also deletes the exemption from communications services

tax and gross receipts tax for separately stated sales price of communications services sold to residential households. The bill is now in the Finance and Tax Subcommittee. There is no Senate companion at this time.

HB 499 – Health Care Coverage by Representative Mia Jones (D – Jacksonville), requires health insurers, corporations, and HMOs issuing certain health policies to provide coverage for telemedicine services. Additionally the bill prohibits exclusion of telemedicine cost coverage solely because services were not provided face to face. The bill specifies conditions under which an insurer, corporation, or HMO must reimburse telemedicine provider for fees and costs, and authorizes provisions requiring deductible, copayment, or coinsurance requirement for telemedicine services. The bill further prohibits imposition of dollar and durational coverage limitations or copayments, coinsurance, or deductibles on telemedicine services unless imposed equally on all terms and services, etc. The bill is in the Health Innovation Subcommittee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 898 by Senator Arthenia Joyner (D – Tampa)** has been referred to the Health Policy, Banking and Insurance, Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services subcommittees and the Appropriations Committee.

SESSION SCHEDULE

HOUSE SESSION TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; 4:30 p.m. until completion

SENATE SESSION TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

JOINT SESSION TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



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