



Volume **22** | Number **1** | **March 2, 2015**

After several months of committee hearings and encouraging budget forecasts, Florida lawmakers are now ready to convene the annual 60-day legislative session. It begins tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. with the State of the State address by Gov. Rick Scott, who is expected to make college affordability and tax breaks among the topics of his speech. For state universities, the continuance of performance funding based on metrics established last session will be front and center during the coming weeks. In addition, legislation lifting a longstanding ban on carrying concealed weapons on campuses is drawing attention already this year. Other bills moving through the legislative process that have the potential to impact public higher education are summarized in the **Spotlight on Bills** section of this newsletter.

Mark your calendar for **Tuesday, March 17** when FSU Day at the Capitol again fills the legislature with garnet and gold! This year's affair includes legislative honors for our National Championship Women's Soccer team, three floors of academic displays, and performances by the pep band, cheerleaders and circus in the courtyard. The evening prior, a reception will also take place on the 22nd floor of the capitol.

To watch the pomp and ceremony surrounding the official opening of the 2015 Legislative Session, as well as the State of the State speech by Governor Rick Scott, tune in to The Florida Channel starting at 9:00 tomorrow morning. Florida Channel programming can be seen locally on Comcast channel 4 and 201, Centurylink channel 12, and online at TheFloridaChannel.org.

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions about pending legislation, and requests for copies of bills and their analysis. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or **kdaly@fsu.edu**.

Kathleen

Governor Scott's 2015 Budget Recommendations

The Governor released his \$76.93 billion budget recommendations to the legislature last month. His recommendations for higher education include:

1. Repeal of the sales tax on textbooks; a 41.4 million tax break, saving the average student about \$60.00 per year.
2. Extending Bright Futures scholarships into the summer session (currently not covered). The Governor proposed \$23.5 million for this extension, but acknowledges that it's probably not enough.
3. No tuition increases – including tuition differential
4. \$400 million for State University System performance funding; \$200 million new money and \$200 million from the universities base
5. \$470 million reduction in taxes on cell phone and television services. This proposal reduces the communications services tax rates which are now 9.17. The Governor states this recommendation will save the average family \$40 per year.

Keep in mind the Governor makes budget recommendations to the legislature, but only the legislature has the authority to appropriate.

Employee Guidelines for Legislative Session

The 2015 Session of the Florida Legislature begins tomorrow. Please note the following Florida State University policies:

- Associate Vice President Kathleen Daly for Governmental Relations is the chief lobbyist for Florida State University.
- No one on campus other than Ms. Daly and Ms. Laura Brock, College of Medicine, are authorized to lobby for Florida State University or the State University System.

However, the Legislature periodically requests faculty and/or staff to attend committee meetings or to formally respond to questions about certain issues. FSU employees asked to appear before committee must notify **Kathleen Daly** at **644-4453** and submit a legislative contact form **prior to making an appearance.**

The form can be found on **govrel.fsu.edu**. If you have trouble accessing this form please contact Governmental Relations at 644-4453 for a hard copy.

Nothing here is intended to discourage FSU employees from exercising their individual rights as citizens or as members of groups or organizations not affiliated with the University. Such rights include the freedom to express their views on legislation, provided that the views are not presented as those of FSU, the SUS, or a subunit of these.

State University Board opts to keep FAMU/FSU College of Engineering

The Florida Board of Governors voted unanimously Feb. 19, 2015, to keep intact the joint **Florida A&M University** and **Florida State University** engineering school, with the caveat that organizational changes be implemented, reports Karl Eppers of The Tallahassee Democrat.

The BOG indicated last week the school should remain together and made several recommendations including: a 12-member joint council of university officials from FAMU and FSU; a new budget entity that will manage funding for the school as a whole instead of separately as in the past; a multiyear plan to address updating facilities; and integrating academic and student affairs activities traditionally split between the universities.

The council would need to provide semiannual updates on recruiting, enrollment and graduation by gender and ethnicity, budget and expenditures, research funding and activities and on hiring, promotion, tenure and integration.

The move came after reviewing a state-commissioned report which said it could cost \$1 billion to split the program between the two schools. Following is a summary of the report:

Commitment to Guiding Principles and a Plan of Action for the FAMU-FSU Joint College of Engineering

The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering should remain a Joint College.

Significant administrative and organizational changes will be implemented over the next year within a renewed Joint College of Engineering Governance Council, including, but not limited to, the following:

- By April 1, 2015, a 12-member permanent Joint College Governance Council will be established, comprised of the Presidents (or their designees), the Provosts, the Vice Presidents for Research, and the Chief Financial Officers of FAMU and FSU. The Dean of the Joint College of Engineering and two student representatives, appointed by the respective Student Government Association presidents of the two universities, will be included as ex-officio non-voting members. The Chancellor will be a voting member of the Governance Council. The Chancellor may also designate a representative.
- The Joint Council shall meet at least quarterly.
- The Joint Council shall receive reports at least semi-annually on the following topics, and may require additional reports at its discretion:

Continued on next page

FAMU/FSU College of Engineering, *continued*

- Recruiting, enrollment and graduation by gender and ethnicity
- Adequacy and consistency in academic preparation and achievement
- Budget and expenditures
- Research funding and activities
- Faculty hiring, promotion, tenure, and integration
- Technology transfer and commercialization activities
- The creation of a new budget entity for the Joint College will be pursued during the 2015 legislative session, to include all operating funds for the Joint College, including the appropriate amount of plant operation and maintenance funds.
- A multi-year plan must be developed and presented to the Board of Governors by June 1, 2015, to address the renovations and repairs for Buildings A and B, and the completion of Building C.
- The Joint College should integrate academic and student affairs activities that have been separately administered by FAMU and FSU so that a true Joint College of Engineering is established.
- By March 1, 2016, the Joint College must submit a report to the Board of Governors documenting the completion of the above activities.

SPOTLIGHT ON **BILLS**

HB 63 – Public Private Partnerships by Representative Greg Steube (R – Sarasota),

defines that public-private partnerships (P3s) are contractual agreements formed between public entities and private sector entities that allow for greater private sector participation in the delivery and financing of public buildings and infrastructure projects. The bill clarifies that the P3 process must be construed as cumulative and supplemental to any other authority or power vested in the governing body of a county, municipality, district, or municipal hospital or health care system. It also provides that the P3 process is an alternative method that may be used.

The bill expands the list of entities authorized to conduct P3s to include state universities. It clarifies that the list includes special districts, school districts rather than school boards, & Florida College System institutions.

The bill provides increased flexibility to the responsible public entity by permitting a responsible public entity to deviate from the provided procurement timeframes if approved by majority vote of the entity's governing body.

The bill provides that an unsolicited proposal must be submitted concurrently with an initial application fee, which may be established by the responsible public entity. The bill authorizes a responsible public entity to request additional funds if the initial fee does not cover the costs to evaluate the unsolicited proposal. It also requires the responsible public entity to return the initial application fee if the responsible public entity does not review the unsolicited proposal.

The bill authorizes the Department of Management Services to accept and maintain copies of comprehensive agreements received from responsible public

entities. The bill reported favorably in the Governmental Operations Subcommittee during interim committee meetings last month. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 824 by Senator Greg Evers (R – Pensacola)** has been filed.

SB 176 – Licenses to Carry Concealed Weapons or Firearms, by Senator Greg Evers (R – Pensacola),

eliminates the statutory prohibition against carrying a concealed weapon or firearm by concealed carry license-holders into any college or university facilities. The bill reported favorably in the Criminal Justice Committee and is now in the Higher Education Committee. The identical bill in the House, **HB 4005 by Representative Greg Steube (R – Sarasota)** reported favorably in the Criminal Justice Subcommittee and is now in the Higher Education and Workforce Committee.

SB 938 – Postsecondary Education Affordability 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. 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. There is no House companion at this time.

HB 333 – Reemployment After Retirement, by Representative Larry Lee (D – Ft. Pierce), provides that members of the Florida Retirement System may be reemployed by an employer that participates in a state-administered retirement system and receive retirement benefits and compensation from that employer. The bill is now in the Government Operations Subcommittee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 696 by Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla (R – Miami)** has

been referred to the Governmental Oversight and Accountability and Appropriations Committees.

SB742 – Ticket Sales by Senator Wilton Simpson (R – New Port Richey), prohibits a person from selling, using, or causing to be used specified means to bypass portions of the ticket-buying process or disguise the identity of the ticket purchaser under certain circumstances. The bill deletes a civil penalty and upgrading the severity of a certain offense to a misdemeanor of the second degree. Additionally, the bill establishes registration requirements for a ticket broker. The bill has been referred to the Commerce and Tourism; Criminal Justice; Appropriations committees. A similar bill in the House, **HB 463, by Representative Blaise Ingoglia (R – Spring Hill)** is now in Business and Professions Subcommittee.

HB 53 – Florida Catastrophic Storm Risk Management Center by Representative Doug Broxson (R – Milton), provides that the State Board of Administration shall annually transfer a portion of the investment income from the Fund to the Center, which resides on the Florida State campus. The amount of funding to be transferred shall be the lesser amount of \$1 million, or 35 percent of the fund's investment income minus \$10 million, as determined by using the

most recent fiscal year-end audited financial statements of the Fund. The bill specifies that any funds transferred must solely be used for and consistent with 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 Insurance and Banking Subcommittee and is now in the Governmental Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. The identical bill in the **Senate, SB 130 by Senator Alan Hays (R- Umatilla)**, is now in the Community Affairs Committee.

HB 45 – Student Loans by Representative Dave Kerner (D – Palm Springs), requires the Justice Administrative Commission & the Office of Attorney General to implement a student loan assistance program to assist attorneys in specified positions in repayment of eligible student loans. The bill establishes requirements and requires payments based on length of employment of eligible attorney & availability of funds. Additionally, the bill provides for funding and requires employers to develop procedures. The bill is now in the Civil Justice Subcommittee. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 150 by Senator Jeremy Ring (D – Margate)** is now in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION

TUESDAY, **MARCH 3**, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

HOUSE SESSION

TUESDAY, **MARCH 3**, 9:30 a.m. until completion
WEDNESDAY, **MARCH 4**, 4:00 p.m. until completion
THURSDAY, **MARCH 5**, 2:30 p.m. until completion

JOINT SESSION

TUESDAY, **MARCH 3**, 11:00 a.m. until completion



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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