



Members of the House and Senate went home early last week for the Passover and Easter holidays. The Capitol was still abuzz, though, primarily because the Revenue Estimating Conference announced an additional \$1 billion in funds would be available, thanks in large part to the booming real estate market (see related story). When lawmakers return to the Capitol today to complete the final three weeks of the session, they will have many decisions to make on how to best allocate these additional dollars.

The House and Senate have already passed their separate spending plans, but there is still more than \$3 billion in recurring and non-recurring funds sitting on the table for the budget conferees and legislative leadership to appropriate. These conferees will likely be announced tomorrow, and the conference process should begin on Wednesday. SUS priorities that lawmakers are being urged to consider as they negotiate the final budget include university enrollment growth, which both current budgets fund at 50% of the amount requested by the Board of Governors and additional non-recurring dollars for state universities, especially for their PECO projects.

The committees that deal with substantive legislation continue to wind down. These include the House and Senate Education committees, which will each meet once this week and once next week. The University Governance bill should be heard in the House sometime this week, where another 30-plus amendments will be debated and voted on (see related story).

We are moving into the portion of the session where the pace steps up and one piece of legislation can morph into another. You can catch all of the action live, everyday, all day, on The Florida Channel (local cable channel 4). As always, feel free to contact me if you have questions or need copies of bills, amendments and/or bill analyses. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or via e-mail at **kdaly@mailers.fsu.edu**.

Kathleen

REVENUE ESTIMATING CONFERENCE

The General Revenue Estimating Conference met last Wednesday and added \$960.2 million to its forecast of General Revenue collections for this year and next. The new forecast contains 7.5% growth in fiscal year 2005-06 over fiscal year 2004-05 and an additional 1.6% growth in fiscal year 2006-07. The additional revenue is largely attributable to a boom in real estate last year.

Governor Jeb Bush applauded hardworking Floridians for driving this growth, but cautioned, "that we must adhere to our principles of fiscal discipline to ensure this prosperity continues." The Governor encouraged the Legislature to carry forward sufficient reserves to ensure Florida will be able to balance the state budget during the next three years. Senate President Tom Lee followed up by saying "Additional revenue is always good news. I hope that we will be able to deposit the majority of these new dollars in Florida's savings account." Conferees will begin negotiating the differences between the House and Senate spending plans later this week.

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

Throughout this Legislative Session, the House Colleges and Universities Committee has been working on a bill to further define the responsibilities of the Legislature, Board of Governors and Boards of Trustees for the State University System. The bill, **HB 7257**, has been work-shopped several times and received numerous amendments. While many issues have been resolved, here are some of the outstanding issues that are still of some concern to the universities:

Bonding

- Authorize portions of the Activity & Service and Athletic Fees as a permissible revenue source
- Remove requirement that auxiliary revenue sources must be "functionally-related"

Major Gifts

- Restore original language for the program ("may" returns to "shall" and "up to" returns to "equal to")
- Authorize a BOG Foundation to participate in the program

Percentage of Out-of-State Students

- Negotiate more flexible language from the proposed 10% limitation

DSO Property Definition

- Delete proposed new definition prohibiting tuition & fees; add language regarding transfer of fees pursuant to agreement between university and DSO

APA

- Authorize a one-year pilot for BOG Regulation process

Administered Funds

- Include language in law that university employees receive all increases afforded to state employees in the GAA

Space Utilization

- Restore original criteria for determining full utilization

Federal Travel Reimbursement Policy

- Grant authority for UBOTs to adopt federal travel reimbursement policy. Universities would not be eligible for funds from the state budget if this provision passes, however.

Limitation on Graduate/ Professional Enrollments

- Reword proposed new language

Board of Governors staff along with University System lobbyists have worked with legislators and staff to prepare amendments to deal with nearly all of these issues. It is anticipated that the bill will be heard and amended by the Education Appropriations Committee this week. Keep in mind that while there are several bills this language could be amended to, there is still no companion bill in the Senate this week.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION

Wednesday, April 19, 2006
10:00 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.
Thursday, April 20, 2006
10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Friday, April 21, 2006
10:00 a.m. to completion

HOUSE SESSION

Tuesday, April 18,
1:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Wednesday, April 19, 2006
11:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Thursday, April 20, 2006
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Friday, April 21, 2006
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.



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Spotlight on Bills

HB 19 — Building Designations by Representative Charlie Justice (D – St. Petersburg), designates several university system buildings including: Univ. of South Florida St. Petersburg as “H. William Heller Hall”; John M. McKay Visitors’ Pavilion at John & Mabel Ringling Museum of Art at Florida State Univ., and all other names on the FSU list. The bill passed out of the Education Council last week. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 1086 by Senator Dennis Jones (R – Seminole)** has been placed on the calendar. **SB 1604, by Senator Al Lawson (D – Tallahassee FSU Alum)** was combined with SB 1086 and contains all of the Florida State University names as well.

HB 769 — University Building Designations by Representative Bill Galvano (R – Bradenton), provides for designation of buildings at University of Florida, Florida State University, University of South Florida, University of South Florida St. Petersburg, & Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, & Florida Gulf Coast University and directs universities to erect suitable markers. The bill is now in the Education Appropriations Committee. The Senate companion, **SB 1616 by Senator Skip Campbell (D – Tamarac)** is in the Government Oversight and Productivity Committee. Another similar bill in the House, **HB 873 by Representative Mary Brandenburg (D – Palm Beach)** passed out of the Education Council last week.

HB 373 — Tuition Waivers/Purple Heart by Representative Gayle Harrell (R – Port St. Lucie), requires state universities & community colleges to waive tuition for recipients of the Purple Heart who fulfill specified criteria. Provides a percentage cap on a number of required credit hours for which the tuition waiver may be received. The bill passed out of the Education Appropriations Committee last week. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 122 by Senator Mike Fasano (R – New Port Richey)** has passed the Senate and is in House messages.

SB 1040 — FRS/Payroll Contribution Rates by the Governmental Oversight and Productivity Committee, revises the payroll contribution rates for membership classes of the Florida Retirement System for state fiscal years effective July 1, 2006, and July 1, 2007; provides declaration of important state interest. The bill has been placed on the Senate calendar. The identical bill in the House, **HB 5025 by the Fiscal Council**

passed the House and is in messages to the Senate.

HB 977 — FRS/Retirement Credit/Special Risk by Representative Ellyn Bogdanoff (R – Ft. Lauderdale), authorizes certain employees to purchase additional retirement credit for past service at 3-percent Special Risk Class accrual value; provides for contribution rate increases to fund certain benefits; directs Statutory Revision Div. to adjust certain contribution rates; provides statement of important state interest. The bill passed out of the Fiscal Council last week. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 2328 by Senator Jeff Atwater (R – North Palm Beach)** has been referred to the Governmental Oversight and Productivity, Community Affairs, Ways and Means committees but has yet to receive a hearing this session.

SB 2048 — Education by the Education Committee requires that the Legislative Budget Commission, reviews proposed federal education plans and specifies that the mission of state’s K-20 education system is to provide high quality, rigorous, and relevant learning opportunities for students. The bill requires legislative approval of the revised state plan to implement certain federal requirements and requires maintenance of uniform school district personnel classification system, etc. The bill is now in the Education Appropriations Committee. The House companion, **HB 7087 by Representative Raphael Arza (R – Hialeah)** has passed the House and is in Senate Messages.

HB 505 —Community College Athletics/Football by Representative Bob Henriquez (D— Tampa), provides that community college’s program of intercollegiate athletics may include intercollegiate football. The bill passed the Education Appropriations Committee last week. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 1356 by Senator Dave Aronberg (D – Greenacres)** has been referred to the Education and Education Appropriations committees but has yet to receive a hearing.

Bill Update

HB 795 —Student Financial Assistance by Representative Anitere Flores (R – Miami), creates the First Generation Matching Grant Program to provide financial aid to undergraduate students with financial need whose parents have not earned a

baccalaureate degree. The bill provides for appropriation, allocation, & distribution of funds and provides student eligibility requirements and provides additional category within which students may be classified as residents for tuition purposes, etc. The bill passed the Education Council last week. The Senate companion, **SB 366 by Senator Frederica Wilson (D – Miami)** is in the Domestic Security Committee.

HB 1171 — Travel to Terrorist States by Representative David Rivera (R – Miami), prohibits use of state or non-state funds made available to community colleges and state universities to implement, organize, direct, coordinate, or administer activities related to or involving travel to a terrorist state. The bill has been placed on the House calendar. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 2434 by Senator Mike Haridopolis (R – Melbourne)** is in the Domestic Security Committee. This bill has a good chance of passing this session, even though the universities oppose it.

HB 1237 — Science & Technology Research by Representative David Mealor (R – Lake Mary), creates the 21st Century Technology, Research, & Scholarship Enhancement Act and creates the Fla. Technology, Research, & Scholarship Board within Board of Governors of State University System. The bill requires that the board provide recommendations for 21st Century World Class Scholars Program & Centers of Excellence Program and specifies purposes of Centers of Excellence, etc. The bill passed the Education Council last week. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 2084 by Senator J.D. Alexander (R – Lake Wales)** is awaiting a hearing in the Education Appropriations Committee.

HB 1065 — Education/Spouses/Disabled Veterans by Representative Stan Jordan (R – Jacksonville), provides that it is declared policy of state to provide educational opportunity at state expense for spouses of deceased or disabled service members and provides criteria for qualification for such benefits for un-remarried spouses of deceased service members and dependent spouses of disabled service members; specifies uses of funds appropriated for such educational opportunities; revises terminology, etc. The bill passed the Education Appropriations Committee last week. The Senate companion, **SB 2034 by Senator Carey Baker (R – Eustis)** has been placed on the calendar for a hearing by the full Senate.