



**FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**  
**P E R C E P T I O N**  
**A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FOR FACC MEMBERS**

Please refer to the legislative issue of *Current* or to the FACC website at [www.facc.org](http://www.facc.org) for an explanation of issues discussed in this report and for other legislative information.

**Issue 9** ■ **2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION** ■ **May 4, 2007**

As expected, week 9, the last week of the 2007 Legislative Session was almost as busy as the last week of the spring semester. Bills affecting community colleges met their final fate in week 9. Among those that passed and that are now on their way to the **Governor Crist** for signing are: **SB 2800 – the 2007-08 Budget; HB 7147 – Baccalaureate bill; HB 343 – FWP Financial Aid; SB 920 – Cosmetology; SB 1270 – Board of Governors; and, SB 1232 – Career Academies.** One that does not directly affect the community colleges, but may be of interest to many is **SB 1710.** This bill establishes a tuition differential for the University of Florida, Florida State University, and University of South Florida. Bills that did not pass related to: **Property Tax Reform, Excess Hours, Textbook Affordability, Retirement Benefit Increases, Transportation Fee, and Financial Aid.** This issue provides a summary of actions taken during week 9. More detailed information on the **2007-08 Budget, 2007 Bills that Passed, and 2007 Bills that Did NOT Pass** can be found at the following link: <http://www.facc.org/legisact.htm>

The 2007 Legislative Session was yet another successful session in no small part to the remarkable team work of the many stakeholders in the Florida Community College System. College Presidents, trustees, college lobbyists, contract lobbyists, and FACC members are all to be thanked and congratulated for their tireless efforts and extraordinary results!

## Budget

The only “must pass” piece of legislation was the **Appropriations Act**, and the final version was made available to members on April 30. The colleges should be pleased with an increase in state funding of 4.9% for the system through the funding formulas, and while it always hurts to have students pay more, a 5% increase in student tuition will help colleges tremendously.

The **Senate** passed the budget on May 3 and in what was a surprise to many, the **House** took up the bill on the same day and passed it one day prior to the end of session. The following link will provide more information on college-by-college funding:  
<http://www.facc.org/legisact.htm>

In addition to the operating dollars from state funds and tuition, the legislature fully endorsed the concept of **Educator Prep Institutes**, by funding them at \$3.8 million, divided equally by the colleges. These Institutes focus on providing baccalaureate degree holders with the training needed to become a teacher. The **Phil Benjamin Matching Program** was fully funded and **SUCCEED** grants were funded at the same level as last year, \$20 million.



*Earnest Sumner (left), the House sergeant at arms, and Senate counterpart Donald Severance mark the session's end on Friday, May 4, in Tallahassee. Photo courtesy of AP.*

College-by-college funding for facilities was a record high of \$544 million. This funding is usually referred to as “**PECO**,” which stands for **Public Education Capital Outlay**. Also, the **Facilities Matching Program** was funded at the amount approved by the **State Board of Education**. That translates to \$52 million for our colleges.

Additional information on the 2007 – 08 Appropriations Act is available on the website. <http://www.facc.org/legisact.htm>

## Substantive Issues

### Bills that Passed and are On Their Way to the Governor

#### Baccalaureate

**HB 7147** became the **House** vehicle by which clarification of the language regarding the process for community colleges to obtain approval to offer **baccalaureate degrees**. Negotiations between the **House** and **Senate** took place throughout week 9. The **House** took up and amended the bill on May 3 and returned it to the **Senate**. The **Senate** then took up and passed the final version of the bill on May 4. More information about the details of the bill can be found on the FACC website at: <http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>

#### Articulation

**SB 1190** (Lynn) has made it to the **Senate** Special Order Calendar on April 27. As amended this bill, creates, in statute, the **Articulation Coordinating Committee** (ACC). While there is currently such a committee, the statutory authority for the Committee was repealed several years ago. This bill puts language back in the statutes that support articulation. There was no **House** companion to the bill, but watered down language from the bill was amended onto the **HB 7147 Baccalaureate Bill**, and passed on May 5. For more information, see **HB 7147** in the Bills that Passed web page: <http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>

#### Financial Aid

Also ordered enrolled on April 27, is **HB 343** (Bean) which amends the **College Work Experience Program** to allow **Adult Vocational** (PSAV) students and **Educator Preparation Institute** (EPI) participants to be included in the program and allow PSAV students to participate in the **Florida Student Access Grants** (FSAG). Funding for both the CWEP and the FSAG was provided in the appropriations conference. For more information, see **HB 343** in the Bills that Passed web page: <http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>



*Sen. Evelyn J. Lynn, R-District 7*

#### Cosmetology

**SB 920** (Wise), amends the licensure requirements related to cosmetology, so that licensure is available for specialties, including hair technician, esthetician and nail technician. Colleges with **cosmetology** programs have supported this legislation which will allow students to be trained in specific, shorter programs and enter the workforce quickly. **SB 920** ran into some trouble on April 24, in the **Senate General Appropriations Committee**. Last second maneuvering helped get the bill through the committee. Then, **SB 970** had no trouble once it made it to the **Senate** floor passing 38-to-1 on April 27, and was sent to the **House**. On May 5, the **House** took up and passed **SB 920**. For more information, see **SB 920** in the Bills that Passed web page: <http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>

## Board of Governors

Legislation that clarifies the responsibilities of the **Board of Governors** versus the **State Board of Education** continues to progress. **SB 1270** (Oerlich) is a 259-page bill that includes mostly technical changes to the law to reflect the BOG. The bill passed the **Senate**, and was taken up by the **House** and passed on April 24. The bill was ordered enrolled, meaning it is ready to be sent to the Governor. For more information, see **SB 1270** in the Bills that Passed web page: <http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>

## University Tuition Differential

**SB 1710** (Oerlich) authorizes the Board of Governors to establish uniform tuition differentials for Level 1 and Level 2 universities. The bill will enable the University of Florida, Florida State University, and the University of South Florida to raise tuition up to 15% per year not to exceed 40% of the tuition charged by other state universities. The tuition differential will not be covered by Bright Futures or the Pre-Paid College program leading many to believe that this is the first step in de-coupling tuition from the Bright Futures program. Governor Crist has expressed concern over this approach, but was recently reported to have not make up his mind on a possible veto. For more information, see **SB 1710** in the Bills that Passed web page:

<http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>



*Sen. Steve Oelrich, R-District 14*

## Career Academies/Articulation

**SB 1232** (Gaetz) focuses on high school **Career Academies** and establishes the requirement that school districts develop strategic plans to meet local workforce needs. All school districts are required to establish career academies. The **State Board of Education** is then to establish a process to review new secondary career courses, and such courses are to lead to “industry certification.” The certification process is to be defined by the **Agency for Workforce Innovation**. Although the **House** version of the bill was thought to be permanently stalled, **HB 965** was heard and passed at the final meeting of the Policy and Budget Committee on April 25, and then put on the **House** Calendar. Since **SB 1232** passed the **Senate** on March 22, the **House** was able to substitute **SB 1232** for **HB 965** and passed it on May 3. **SB 1232** is now on its way to the Governor. For more information, see **SB 1232** in the Bills that Passed web page:

<http://www.facc.org/2007BillsthatPassed.pdf>

## Bills that Did Not Pass

### Excess Hours

Senator Lee Constantine’s “excess hours” bill, **SB 2862**, appears to have failed. The bill would require students to pay an additional 50% tuition when they exceed 120% of credit hours required by their declared degree.

While the bill passed out of the Committee April 19, it is not anticipated to be heard again, nor is **HB 1507** (Altman).



**SB 2862** died in **Senate Higher Education Appropriations**.

**HB 1507** died in **House Schools and Learning Council**.

Note: A community college task force will be working in the interim to develop a means of identifying a very specific group of students to whom this could apply without creating unintended consequences to other groups of students.

## Textbook Affordability (formerly Textbook Sales Tax Exemption)

The FACC legislative team and the Florida Junior and Community College Student Government Association (FJCCSGA) joined forces to promote legislation that would give a sales tax exemption for college textbooks. [HB 289](#) (Flores) originally included the sales tax exemption. However, amendments in the **House Schools and Learning Council** removed the exemption. The bill requires a study regarding textbook prices, and the identification of policies and practices that might help reduce the costs. The bill also restricts postsecondary employees from benefiting from textbook selection. [HB 289](#) actually passed the **House** on April 27, but the **Senate** companions are still in committee. [SB 254](#) (Wise) and [SB 2492](#) (Haridopolos) are the companions.

**HB 289** died in **messages** in the **Senate**.

**SB 254** died in **Senate Higher Education Appropriations**.

**SB 2492** died in **Senate Community Affairs**.

## FCAT changes

The **House Schools and Learning Council Bill** on K-12 standards is [HB 7151](#). This bill replaces the existing **Sunshine State Standards** (which identify what should be taught at each grade level) with “**world class education standards**.” One of the “100 Innovative Ideas” is that the State should raise the standards as to what is expected of K-12 students. The Bill was put on the House Calendar in week eight, had been heard and approved on second reading, and was temporarily postponed on third reading on April 26. The **Senate** companion, [SB 1238](#), was discussed in the **Education PreK-12 Appropriations Committee**, but temporarily postponed.

**HB 7151** died in **messages** in the **Senate**.

**SB 1238** died in **Senate Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations**.



*House Speaker Marco Rubio, R-Miami (initiator of the “100 Innovative Ideas” effort), and Senate President Ken Pruitt, R-Port St. Lucie*

## Half Cent Sales Tax for Miami Dade County

[HB 185](#) (Garcia) and [SB 552](#) (Margolis) would have allowed the Miami Dade County Commission to place a local referendum for Miami Dade College. If passed locally, a half penny sales tax increase for five years would support scholarships, program enhancements, student retention efforts, and capital outlay.

**HB 185** died in **House Policy and Budget**.

**SB 552** died in **Senate Finance and Tax**.

## Financial Aid

**HB 1443** (Thompson) also addressed FSAG, addressing the issue of the expected family contribution for community college students, and also creates a new “working student” financial aid program, to address those students who can only qualify for student loans. **SB 2698** (Lawson) was the companion to **HB 1443**, but also stated that within FSAG, community college students are not required to receive PELL grants in order to obtain FSAG. The SB also addressed student residency issues. The changes would allow recent high school graduates (who have legal status) to claim residency if they move on to higher education within a year, and allows step-parent residency to apply to a dependent student.

**HB 1443** died in **House Postsecondary Education**.  
**SB 2698** died in **Senate Higher Education Appropriations**.

## Transportation Fee

**HB 207** (Chestnut) and **SB 684** (Oelrich) would have authorized a transportation user fee for community college students. **Santa Fe Community College** has a unique agreement for public transportation that would be well served by this legislation. Since the fee is not limited to **Santa Fe Community College**, district boards of trustees at other colleges would be permitted to implement the fee.

**HB 207** died in **House Policy and Budget Council**.  
**SB 684** died in **Senate Higher Education Appropriations**.



*Education Appropriations Committee Chairman Rep. Joe Pickens, R-Palatka, was a big proponent of FACC-supported legislation in 2007.*

## Retirement/FRS Benefits

**SB 0008** (Lawson) and **HB 0087** (Allen) both were filed to increase the health insurance subsidy to employees under the Florida Retirement System. Both bills had a long list of co-sponsors. However, the bills have not been heard. Three bills were filed to increase the retirement multiplier of a regular class employee from 1.6 percent of the employee’s average final compensation. **HB 657** (Gelber) and **SB 2210** (Villalobos) proposes to raise the multiplier to 3.0 percent. **SB 568** (Jones) proposes to increase it to 1.8 percent.

**SB 0008** died in **Senate Governmental Operations**.  
**HB 0087** died in **House State Affairs**.  
**HB 657** died in **House State Affairs**.  
**SB 2210** died in **Senate Governmental Operations**.  
**SB 568** died in **Senate Community Affairs**.

## Fulltime Faculty Ratios

**HB 1279** (Fitzgerald) and **SB 2652** (Geller) proposed to require that 75% of college faculty be full time employees. Neither was ever heard.

**HB 1279** died in **House Postsecondary Education**.  
**SB 2652** died in **Senate Higher Education**.

## Other Resources

### **2007-08 Budget Information:**

[Funding Highlights for 2007-08](#)

[2007-08 Budget Categories Comparison](#)

[2007-08 Budget Issues Comparison](#)

[2007-08 Projected State Appropriations \(college-by-college\)](#)

### **2007 Substantive Legislation:**

[2007 Bills that Passed](#)

[2007 Bills that Did NOT Pass](#)