

FACC PERCEPTIONS LEGISLATIVE E-Zine
A Member Service from the Florida Association of Community Colleges

It was a busy week in Tallahassee for the FACC lobbying team. The 2010 legislative session got off to a roaring start with most of the focus on the budget deficit the state is facing. With deficit projections ranging anywhere from 1.5B - 3.2B dollars, the House and the Senate are scrambling to find ways to fund higher education. Our consistent message to them is fund our growth, before cutting us again.

With significant enrollment growth over the last three years, the Florida College System has borne an additional 200,000 students in the face of consistent budget reductions. Currently serving almost 915,000 students statewide some schools have grown enrollment as much as 22% over the last year alone. Widely viewed as the engine to help spur economic and workforce development, your FACC legislative team is covering a lot of ground. Those team members include:

Erin McColskey (PBSC) Chair
Don Payton (SSCF)
Sharon Crow (DCS)
Susan Lehr (FSCJ)
Larry Bracken (PJC)
Victoria Hernandez (MDC)
Matt Holliday (ESC)
Bill Mallowney (VCC)
Barbara Pippin (BC)
Jim Roy (SJRCC)
Jeff Schembera (NWFSC)
Sally Everett (HCC)
Steve Schroeder (PHCC)
Traci Steen (SCF)
Andy Treadwell (IRSC)
Ed Woodruff (SPC)
Gary Yancey (NWFSC)
Guy York (SFC)
Dug Jones (SFC)
Michael Brawer (FACC)

High Priority Bills being monitored are listed below

[Transportation Fee. SB 208 by Oelrich; HB 0255 by Chestnut](#)

Started as a local bill for Santa Fe College eleven years ago, this bill passed last year but was vetoed by the Governor. The bill simply provides authority to district boards of trustees to implement a transportation fee not to exceed \$6 per credit hour. The fee is dedicated to provide students free access to local bus services. Many universities already

have such a fee in place. The bill is moving through committees of referral favorably and is now on second reading in the Senate.

Fire Safety SB 1074 by Wise; HB 531 by Weinstein

This bill is a the result of colleges who have collaborated with K-12 and the State Fire Marshal to reach agreement on legislation that will provide cost efficiencies, eliminate unnecessary reports, eliminate duplicative inspections, clarify fire code inspection responsibilities and provide site plan documents needed by local fire officials. No committee action yet taken.

Residency for Tuition Purposes SB 2398 by Ring; HB 1243 by Tobia

This bill will revise the determination of Resident Status for Tuition Purposes. Revises definitions of "dependent child" & "parent" to include step-parent information toward residency. It aligns definitions of dependency to be consistent with federal financial aid rules. The bill will also allow an institution of higher education to verify documentation of residency through electronic means, such as a driver's license. The bill also revises requirements relating to proof of employment in general rather than only full-time employment. It provides for residency status of students who attended a Florida high school for their final two-years, have obtained citizenship, and enroll within 12 months of graduation. It accommodates foster children and others under tuition waivers to receive resident classification. Finally, the bill will allow a transfer of residency classification to another institution within 12 months. Currently in State Universities and Private Colleges committee.

Charter Technical Centers SB 228 by Wise; HB 0353 by Patterson

This bill would allow certain public technical schools to become "colleges". Specifically, First Coast Technical Institute and Lake Technical Institute are seeking this designation. The FACC does not oppose the concept however we are seeking significant amendments to this bill. These issues include:

- SACS accreditation is obtained prior to use of term "college" in their title.
- The Local School Board approves the change
- Degrees offered are limited to Associate of Applied Science only (AAS)
- The State Board of Education reviews alternative proposals and applies similar rigor to program approval as our colleges are submitted to.

There has been no committee action on this bill yet.

College Name Changes HB 245 by Bernard and SB 0436 by Baker

This bill will codify the name changes approved by the respective district boards of trustees for Seminole State College of Florida (Seminole Community College) and Palm

Beach State College (Palm Beach Community College). Although DBOT's may approve a name change Florida law requires such changes be codified by the Legislature. These bills have moved unanimously through all committees and are on second reading in the Senate.

State Retirement HB 1319 by Grady; Compare SB 1902 by Bennett; and HB 1543 by Zapata

These proposed bills are not yet identical but likely will be merged in the near future. Referred to as the Public Employee Retirement Preservation Act, the bill dramatically changes the FRS as we know it. First, it appears that most employees already in the FRS will be held harmless from most of the changes. Those changes include:

1. For new employees hired on or after July 2011 or any employee whose DROP begins on or after the same date, will be required to pay a 1% retirement co-pay.
2. Limits retirement payouts to 80% of average final compensation to those who have earned 10 years of creditable service in the FRS by July 1, 2010.
3. Changes retirement points from 30 years to 33 years for those who retire at any age; and change retirement age for those with 6 or more years from age 62 to age 65.
4. Revises the retirement accrual rate from 1.6% to 1.44% annually for all creditable years after September 30, 2011. This change appears to impact everyone.

The FACC team is closely monitoring these changes and working on alternative proposals to limit the adverse impact on college employees. There has been no committee action yet.

Bright Future Awards HB 1415 by Tobia; SB 2642 by Baker

Legislation passed in 2009 which decoupled tuition from the award amount, i.e., the award did not equal total tuition. That provision though was only in effect for one year. The state still cannot fund the Bright Futures awards to 100%. This new proposal significantly revises the program to include five levels of award, instead of three. The levels are designated by differences in academic and service achievement. There has been no committee action yet.

Bright Futures Award Repayment HB 0667 by Tobia; SB 1966 by Baker

Legislation passed last year that requires Bright Futures students who drop a class after drop-add to repay that amount of the scholarship to their college. The college is then responsible to repay the total of dropped classes amounts to the state. However, last year's law that passed requires our schools to repay 100% of the amounts even though not all may have been collected. This places a significant financial burden on our colleges. This bill revises that to require the colleges to repay only the amounts

collected. The bill is in State Universities and Private Colleges committee but no action has been taken yet.

Public Official Severance payouts SB 2466 by Gaetz; no companion or similar bills

This bill would impact non-elected public officials. It is not clear if this definition impacts any class within the Florida College System. The bill however provides for potential limitations to severance payouts. Severance payout would no longer include compensation earned from earned and accrued annual, sick, compensatory, and administrative leave. On or after July 1, 2010, a public officer serving in a non-elected position may not receive severance pay unless it is paid from wholly private funds. There has been no committee action yet.

Nursing Programs SB 2530 by Alexander; HB 1337 by Grimsley

This is a bill related to nursing that makes numerous changes. Among other things, it authorizes the disclosure of certain confidential information required of nursing license applicants. It revises requirements for graduation from certain nursing education programs for nursing license applicants seeking to take the licensing examination. It revises the restrictions on the use of certain graduates who may use certain titles and abbreviations. The bill also revises requirements for the approval of nursing education programs by the Board of Nursing, including application requirements and procedures for the review and approval or denial of applications.

Our legislative lead tracking this issue has cited some issues with the bill.. These include:

1. Language that leaves an option for programs that cease to be accredited to then apply to become an approved program.
2. There is still an omission regarding the level of 50% of faculty credentials. The FCNEA has some recommended language to clarify.
3. There is a desire to make the clinical hours for ADN the same as BSN since both types of students receive the RN designation upon passing the licensure exam. This would be a change to current law.
4. There is a desire to advocate for reduced clinical ratio from 1:18 to 1:12.
5. There is concern that the bill does not address the curriculum frameworks. There have been complaints by "stakeholders" regarding the BON requirement to include DOE curriculum frameworks in the applications (per OPPAGA report). We are trying to find out the status of where BON is on this and if we need to include either the frameworks or reference to use of DOE curriculum frameworks in statute. Also of concern is the measurement of curriculum quality.

There are 6 colleges that are only SACS accredited. They are NFCC, SFCC, TCC, BCC, LSCC and NWF State College. If these are LPN there is not the same level of concern regarding NLNAC or CCNE accreditation. The remainder of the colleges are NLNAC

accredited and SPC is both NLNAC and CCNE accredited. There has been no committee action yet.