



PERCEPTIONS LEGISLATIVE E-Zine # 3
For members of the Florida Association of Community Colleges

CONFORMING BILL IN THE SENATE MAKES THINGS INTERESTING

SB 7078 was released last week by the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill, known as a conforming bill, is designed to embody numerous budgetary issues related to higher education. In addition to the budgetary issues it addresses, it also addresses issues in previous legislation or other statutes that need to be “conformed” to the current proposals. Regarding the overall appropriation from the committee, as reported last week, we can not be too displeased with the Senate proposed 5.4% overall increase. There are many policy issues also addressed in the bill as well as the initial House appropriations bill released late last week. Special thanks to FACC Legislative Committee Chair Erin McColskey (PBSC) for the bulleted summary provided below. Both the House and Senate bills are compared where common issues are addressed:

1. Bright Futures Scholarships:
 - Senate proposed changes:
 - changes eligibility requirements
 - deletes restoration option
 - reduces credits covered to 100% of degree requirements
 - keeps award at flat rate at this year’s level
 - requires FASFA to be completed
 - limits use of the award to four years, from seven. (We are working with DOE to determine how many of our BF recipients are part-time students, to determine the impact)
 - House proposed changes:
 - continue flat award amounts in 2009-10 for another year

2. Residency for Tuition Purpose
 - Both the Senate and House are amending language to require school district PSAV programs to use same residency policy as our colleges.

3. President's pay
 - Senate proposing limit of pay from "state funds." The Chair clearly stated that tuition and fees were not 'state funds' for this purpose. We will monitor to assure this position follows through.
4. College and Workforce Fees
 - Senate proposes all exempt students pay a fee of some manner, except literacy and pre-diploma), and clarification on CWE. We encourage this review.
5. Open Access Textbooks
 - Senate proposes "encouraging open access" textbooks. We support any effort to reduce textbook costs.
6. Higher Education Coordinating Council
 - Senate proposes a joint council. We will encourage any joint reviews to focus on what is best for the student and provision of options to meet student needs. We also encourage data-driven review and processes, recognizing that some duplication is warranted duplication. Cost to students should be considered along with cost to the State.
7. Possible Merger study
 - Senate proposes OPPAGA study of the pros and cons of a merger of Adult Public School Workforce into the Florida College System. We support the study, even though this is historically a contentious issue.
8. Library Automation
 - Both the Senate and House encourage consolidated purchasing and universal search engines. We will be monitoring this to assess impact.
9. College System Baccalaureates
 - Senate proposes NEW baccalaureates NOT be funded from the CCPF, only with specific baccalaureate funds, foundation funds, or other revenue. The Senate did NOT roll the baccalaureate funds into the CCPF.
 - House did roll the funds in to the CCPF, and we propose supporting this position.
10. Reprioritize Program Funding
 - Senate provides for targeted funding for priority programs, STEM fields, and meeting state workforce needs. We are cautious about this and will request that the funds be distributed via formula.
11. 2 + 2 incentives

- Senate wants to encourage expansion and creation of partnerships for 2 + 2 degrees. We have not found the line item in the proposed budget that does this and will watch as it evolves.

RETIREMENT – SB 1902 May be on The Move

As reported last week, there are five bills and one shell bill submitted that do something or another to change the Florida retirement system as we know it. The proposed changes are designed to save the state money by decreasing the eligibility pool over time and thus reducing the state's contribution on behalf of its employees. To date, none of the bills have moved, but it appears that SB 1902 by Sen. Bennett will be heard this week in the Community Affairs Committee on March 23, at 1:00pm. The provisions of this bill as previously described are not drastic but do portend to change the retirement payout contribution relative to one's average final compensation:

- On or after July 1, 1980 retirement may not exceed 100% of one's average final compensation
- On or after July 1, 2010 retirement may not exceed 70% of one's average final compensation
- Effective July 1, 2010 Average final compensation excludes overtime and other compensation (retirement will be adjusted for leave payouts)

Status of the other retirement bills is as follows:

HB 1543 by Zapata referred to Referred to Governmental Affairs Policy Committee; Government Operations Appropriations Committee; Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council – **not scheduled in any committee.**

HB 1319 by Grady Referred to Community Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability; General Government Appropriations; Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means – **not scheduled in any committee.**



HB 413 by Wood, Precourt, Mayfield Referred to Governmental Affairs Policy Committee; Full Appropriations Council on Education & Economic Development / **SB 660 Fasano (identical)** Referred to Community Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability; General Government Appropriations; Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means – **not scheduled in any committee.**

SB 2022 Alexander – still a shell bill

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

FACC members can help by contacting any member of the Senate Community Affairs committee and expressing your concern regarding the proposed bill. In doing this, please be polite and positive, yet concerned. Describe the impact of these changes on you, your colleagues, and others at you college or in your community.

Committee Members					
	Name		District	Phone / Assist	Location
	Bennett, Michael 'Mike' (Chair)	(R)	21	(850) 487-5078 Jacquie Connell	322 Senate Office Bldg.
	Siplin, Gary (Vice Chair)	(D)	19	(850) 487-5190 Lakeisha Hood	205 Senate Office Bldg.
	Altman, Thad	(R)	24	(850) 487-5053 Christine Wayne, Brittany O'Connor, Kari Janzen	324 Senate Office Bldg.
	Deutch, Ted	(D)	30	(850) 487-5091	216 Senate Office Bldg.
	Garcia, Rudy	(R)	40	(850) 487-5106	414 Senate Office Bldg.
	Gardiner, Andy	(R)	9	(850) 487-5047 Kathy Johnson, Stacy Vancamp- Garcia, Michael Broom	308 Senate Office Bldg.
	Hill, Anthony C. 'Tony'	(D)	1	(850) 487-5024 Tracy Butler	213 Senate Office Bldg.
	Ring, Jeremy	(D)	32	(850) 487-5094 Sheldon Plotnick, Joel Ramos, Paul Moore	326 Senate Office Bldg.
	Storms, Ronda	(R)	10	(850) 487-5072 Kristina Austin, Audrey Canney, Beth Sutkoway	413 Senate Office Bldg.

	Thrasher, John	(R)	8	(850) 487-5030 Darla Kubacki, Kay Rousseau, Kelly Williams, Rebecca Stagg	212 Senate Office Bldg.
	Wise, Stephen R.	(R)	5	(850) 487-5027	410 Senate Office Bldg.

HIGH PRIORITY BILLS BEING MONITORED ARE LISTED BELOW. Only bills that have had some action the past week are addressed.

[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 current version of the bill is gaining has passed every committee stop but has gotten hung up on a Governor's office request that each college wishing to implement the fee shall conduct a student referendum to approve it. It was on Special Order calendar for March 16 and ready for final vote when it was withdrawn. It is retained on the calendar pending negotiations with the Governor's office.

[Nursing Programs SB 2530 by Alexander; HB 1337 by Grimsley](#)

This is a bill related to nursing that revises requirements for the approval of nursing education programs by the Board of Nursing, including application requirements, procedures for the review and approval or denial of applications, clarifies pass rates national exams, and authorizes nursing program directors to receive on pass rate for program graduates. The bill has moved through the State Universities and Private Colleges Policy committee in the House and was heard in health care Regulation Policy committee on March 16. It passed unanimously and has now moved to the Healthcare Appropriations committee. It is not scheduled to be heard there yet.

Other bills reported last week are listed below but have not changed status:

[Fire Safety SB 1074 by Wise; HB 531 by Weinstein](#)

[Residency for Tuition Purposes SB 2398 by Ring; HB 1243 by Tobia](#)

[Charter Technical Centers SB 228 by Wise; HB 0353 by Patterson](#)

[College Name Changes HB 245 by Bernard and SB 0436 by Baker](#)

[Bright Future Awards HB 1415 by Tobia; SB 2642 by Baker](#)

[Bright Futures Award Repayment HB 0667 by Tobia; SB 1966 by Baker](#)