



ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA COLLEGES
Perception
A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FOR AFC MEMBERS

**Week Three Session Summary January 23-27
January 30, 2012**

BUDGET

House Releases Higher Ed Budget

Taking the lead this year, the Florida House released a \$69.2B 2012-13 FY budget last Thursday. Included therein is the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee budget recommendation for the Florida College System. The proposed budget includes:

1. Total appropriations of \$986.9 million (-4.0%)
2. A reduction of \$66.9 million (6.5%) from the Community College Program Fund including:
 - Reduction of \$71.5 million from the base budget
 - Full funding of \$7.6 million in new funds for Operating Cost of New Facilities
 - Additional \$4.2 million for FRS adjustments
 - Additional \$8.5 million provided to three specified colleges
 - Authority for an 8% tuition and fee increase
 - Transfer of CCLA funding (\$12.8 million) to the Florida Virtual Campus
3. With tuition increase, the total available funds in the CCPF would be \$1,954B, an increase of about 0.4%

ONLINE LEARNING

HB 5201 By O'Toole and House Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations regarding the Creation of the Florida Virtual Campus and Online Learning pilots

Creation of the Florida Virtual Campus (FVC) funded at \$26.9 million is designed to do a number of things. Among them it emphasizes retrieving students who have "stopped" attending due to various reasons that may have limited their access to campus. The entire concept is designed to enhance completion. The bill includes \$2.5 million for a Student Access Pilot with Western Governors University in conjunction with UNF, UWF, Valencia College, and FSCJ. Also, part of this effort is to consolidate the functions of CCLA, FCLA, and the Distance Learning Consortium and permanently transfer those funds to categorical funding for the FVC.

The bill also restores \$3M for 2+2 Partnerships as recurring funds. However, for another year, there are no funds provided for Philip Benjamin Matching Grants or the Facilities Challenge Grants programs.

PECO

HB 5703 by Precourt and the House Finance and Tax Committee regarding Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)

The House Finance and Tax Committee on Thursday introduced a bill that would increase some tax rates for gross receipts tax that funds PECO (Public Education Capital Outlay) with offsetting decreases in communications taxes that flow into the state's general fund. The bill has not yet been analyzed by state economists but legislative staff says it would boost PECO revenues by nearly \$50 million in the first year, allowing for a maximum appropriation of \$382M, if the state issues new bonds backed by the revenue. Gross receipts revenues have been flat for several years, as a result of the recession, reduction in new construction utility hook ups, loss of land line telephones, as well as increased energy efficiency. The proposed budget would allow for the continuation of some projects and includes \$55 million for PECO-funded building maintenance at charter schools, nearly \$139 million in projects at state colleges, and nearly \$154 million for projects at state universities, but no money for school districts.

STUDENT TUITION AND FEES

HB 81 by Bullard and SB 106 by Siplin (similar) regarding Postsecondary Student Fees

These bills would exempt from payment of nonresident tuition at SUS or FCS students who attended a Florida high school for at least three years (does not have to be consecutive) and has graduated with a diploma or GED. This would apply to students who are new or currently enrolled or if not, is filing to be legal resident. The bill would require the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to adopt rules for implementation.

HB 441 by Fullwood and SB 1018 by Garcia (similar) regarding Resident Status for Tuition

Purposes

Similarly this bill would classify as residents for tuition purposes certain dependent children who meet requirements relating to high school attendance, timely enrollment in institution of higher education, and submission of a transcript. Comparatively, the Senate bill classifies as residents for tuition purposes a US citizen who attends a Florida high school for at least two consecutive years and submits a transcript to and enrolls in an institution within 12 months after graduating from a Florida high school.

COLLEGE CREDIT

HB 347 by Harrell and SB 532 by Altman (identical) regarding College Credit for Military Training and Education Courses

These bills would require the Board of Governors of SUS and the State Board of Education to adopt

regulations and rules that will enable U.S. Armed Forces service members to earn college credit for college-level training and education acquired in military.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

SB 1040 By Bogdanoff and HB/CS 1313 by Corcoran (similar) regarding Dental Hygienists administering Local Anesthesia

This change in law would allow dental hygienists to give patients local anesthesia injections. Florida is among only six states who do not allow this. Programs would be required to add a lab component within existing curriculum on anesthesia and expand for cooperative work experience for the expanded functions. The bills are supported by the state Board of Dentistry and the Florida Dental Association.

DATA AND JOB PLACEMENT

SB 1366 by Gaetz regarding Outcome Reporting (no companion)

This bill would require colleges and universities to present data on job placement rates and salary information for our graduates. An AFC Legislative Committee team including Steve Schroeder (PHCC), Don Payton (SSC), Sharon Crow (DSC), Michael Brawer (AFC) and John McNeely (DOE) took the lead on writing some amendments to assure that the FCS will be able to report the broadest possible array of completions.

BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

SB 0492 by Braynon and HB 4041 by Burgin (similar) regarding the Approval of College Baccalaureate degrees

This bill among other things would repeal the exception for SBOE approval for FCS baccalaureate degrees. Currently, after offering a bachelor's degree for three years, a college may apply for an exemption from SBOE approval to offer more. The bill would keep the current baccalaureate degree process in place.

FROM THE NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA WIRE....

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Florida became Ground Zero this week as Republican candidates flocked to the state and flooded the airwaves in preparation for what could be a pivotal presidential primary on Tuesday. With political polls fluctuating more than the Dow Jones Industrial Average, GOP hopefuls traded barbs over character, upbringing, and a host of other non-policy issues at local whistle stops, major gatherings of Hispanic leaders and in a pair of nationally televised debates.

A surprise victory by Newt Gingrich in South Carolina the week before ensured that campaign money and the eyes of the nation would turn to Florida, which now looks to have the kind of clout in the selection of a Republican standard bearer that backers of moving the primary earlier had hoped.

While Wolf Blitzer tried to pin down Gov. Rick Scott on his presidential preference, state lawmakers slogged through a week of committee meetings. Most proposals, both major and minor, continued the trek through the process, but there were a few casualties as powerful interest groups locked horns over issues of attorneys v. insurance companies.

BUDGETS MOVING IN HOUSE, NOT SENATE

House budget builders on Friday released their \$69.2 billion spending blueprint that includes more than \$1 billion in additional funding for K-12 education and more than \$2.5 billion in reserves. The Senate spending plan, however, may not be finalized for a couple weeks as budget leaders review spending allocations -- particularly in the health and human services sectors -- for potential cuts as they attempt to fill a budget gap that could reach \$2 billion. Haridopolos said his chamber won't release its budget allocations for at least a couple of weeks as leaders try to gather more information on budget and revenue issues, especially in the area of social services. "We have not put out allocation and it's for a simple reason," the Senate president told reporters. "I want some more information from the individual budget chairs before I tell them what they can or can't spend, especially on health and human services."

PRIVATE PRISONS

A legislative proposal to privatize about 30 prisons in most of the southern part of the state is headed for the Senate floor after a vote in the Budget Committee that angered prison guards who feel they're not being heard. The proposal was put into law as part of last year's budget, to be later thrown out by a court. Senate backers say the issue has been thoroughly vetted, with several committee meetings last year in addition to three this year, including one where nearly 50 opponents - and no proponents - were heard on the matter. They also say the state could save \$20 million a year in prison costs by outsourcing the facilities to a private vendor or vendors. Critics say the savings may be less pronounced, especially if the more violent offenders are shifted over to state custody.

REDISTRICTING

Not to be outdone in moving quickly as the session approaches the halfway week, the House moved into position to take up its proposals to change political boundaries. The House Redistricting Committee finished its work Friday by approving blueprints for Florida's political future. Measures redefining the boundaries for the Legislature (HJR 6001, 6011) and Florida's 27 congressional seats (HB 6005) passed the panel on a series of party-line votes, bringing the House role in the once-a-decade redistricting process close to a conclusion. Few think, however, that the process is likely to end with final House and Senate votes on the measures expected by the end of next week. While Gov. Rick Scott seems likely to sign the congressional plan, the Florida Supreme Court must review the legislative plan -- and both could be challenged under either the state's new anti-gerrymandering Fair Districts amendments or the federal Civil Rights Act.