



ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA COLLEGES

CAPITOL PERCEPTIONS

A WEEKLY DIGEST OF LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Your Weekly Legislative Update

January 16, 2018
Week One Session Summary
January 8 - January 12, 2018
Legislative Session 2018

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2018 Legislative Session - Week 1

Week 1

January 8-12, 2018

Association of Florida Colleges Legislative Days
January 30-31, 2018 [Click Here](#) to Register!!

LET THE SESSION BEGIN!!

The 2018 Legislative Session started on Tuesday, January 9 and will run for 60 days. With little time between the end of the 2017 session and the beginning of the 2018 session, which begins early in election years, the AFC advocacy focus is squarely on the Council of Presidents budget request of \$286 million in new funds, and on the potential impacts from proposed SB 540, entitled the "Community College Competitiveness Act" and its House companion HB 831. Summaries of both are provided herein. With no particular excitement in either legislative Chamber, the political news was dominated by some other statewide activity.

COLLEGE TRUSTEES CONVENE FOR ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Concurrent with the start of the annual legislative session the AFC Trustees Commission held its annual Legislative Conference on January 10-11. Over 100 college trustees, presidents, and other administrators attended. They were provided educational sessions covering the statewide legislative overview, the constitutional revision process, and the Florida Chamber of Commerce's 2030 jobs project. All trustees were provided talking points and data sheets regarding the Council of Presidents Legislative Budget Request of \$286 million. On the morning of January 11, the trustees also heard from CFO Patronis, Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, Democrat Majority Leader Janet Cruz, Rep. Chuck Clemons (who also works at Santa Fe College), House Budget Committee Chair Rep. Rodrigues, House Postsecondary Education Chair Rep. Elizabeth Porter, and Rep. Frank White.

After a visit from US Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Governor Scott took credit for getting Florida shores off the government waters drilling list proposed by the Trump administration. Widely opposed by Florida Democrats and Republicans Scott says he talked the president into protecting Florida shores. However, other governors across the country in coastal states, as well as environmentalists and Democrats view it as a political ploy for Scott who is expected to run for the US Senate seat held by Bill Nelson.

FLORIDA GRADUATION RATE GROWS

Florida's statewide high school graduation rate reached 82.3 % for the 2016-17 school year. The new data shows an improvement of 1.6% over the prior year and a 23.1% increase since the 2003-04 school year. Disabled students have seen the best in graduation rates over the past five years with a 13.7% increase. Black students improved 10.2% and Hispanic students 6.4%. Commissioner Pam Stewart stated that, "Excelling in high school opens doors to opportunities that provide students long-term benefits and Florida's steady increase is promising for our state's and students' futures."

RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN SCHOOLS

Gov. Scott and First Lady Ann Scott announced contests for Black History Month coming up in February. The theme is "A Celebration of Innovative African-American Leaders." K-3 will participate in an art contest. Grades 4-12 will have an essay contest. There will be two winners selected for the art contest and three for the essay contest – elementary, middle and high school. Three teachers will also have the chance to earn the Excellence in Education Award.

BILLS TO WATCH

[SB 540](#) by Hukill "The Community College Competitiveness Act" (Identical - [HB 831](#) by Gruters)

This is an omnibus-type bill that impacts the Florida College System in many different ways.

1. Renames the Florida College System, the "Florida Community College System" (FCCS);
2. Creates a 13 member State Board of Community College (SBCC) as the governing body (with rule-making responsibilities) for the System and transferring all powers and duties of State Board of Education (SBOE) to the SBCC on Oct. 1, 2018;
3. SBCC members shall be appointed by Governor;
4. The SBCC shall appoint the Chancellor by Nov. 1, 2018;
5. Defines the primary missions of the FCCS, career centers and charter technical centers;
6. Places restrictions on Direct Support Organizations in regard to use of state funds for personal services and travel;
7. Setting total upper-level (baccalaureate) undergraduate enrollment caps in FCCS institutions (20%) and in the System (10%).
8. Establishing "Supporting Students for Academic Success Program"

SB 540 has passed one committee and will be heard at Appropriations Sub-committee on Higher Education on January 17 at 1:30pm.

HB 831 is not scheduled to be heard this week.

[SB 1752](#) by Torres regarding Bright Futures Scholarships (Identical - [HB 1331](#) by Smith) Senate President Joe Negron is being heavily supported for bringing significant changes to the higher education system by slashing tuition bills for the top students in Florida. If the House agrees with the budget proposal, the Bright Futures Scholarship Program would receive \$124 million and bring back full tuition for students in public colleges and universities. A companion bill in the House was referred to three committees. Last year, the measure was vetoed by Gov. Scott.

SB 1752 has been referred to Education; Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education.

HB 1331 has been referred to Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee; Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee; Education Committee.

[SB 4](#) by Galvano “The Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018” (Similar - HB 423 by Rodrigues)

CS/SB 4 establishes the “Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018” to expand financial aid provisions and incentivize postsecondary institutions to emphasize on-time graduation. The bill also expands policy and funding options for state universities to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and enhance the quality of professional and graduate schools. It does not include provisions dealing with FCS governance, no limitations on FCS baccalaureate degrees, no changes to FCS performance or distinguished college metrics. Prohibits university DCOs from using personnel services after 2023 and provides that no state money may be spent on DSO travel. No limitations are placed on FCS DSOs. Allows Bright Futures awards to be used to cover technology fees. Allows Bright Futures awards to be used for summer school. Bright Futures Academic Scholars program is returned to 100% of tuition and fees, plus \$300 for textbooks. Medallion Scholars Program is returned to 75% of tuition and fees with no provision for textbooks. First Generation Matching Grant program is extended to the FCS; there would be a \$2 match in state money for every \$1 raised privately.

SB 4 has been certified and is in messages for House action.

HB 423 PCS is on the agenda for the House Post-secondary Education Subcommittee, January 17th, 9:30am.

[HB 75](#) by Ponder regarding Post-Secondary Fee Waivers (Similar [SB 460](#) by Gainer)

Authorizes FCS institutions to waive portion of certain postsecondary fees for active duty members of U.S. Armed Forces using military tuition assistance; requires FCS institutions to report to SBE number & value of such fee waivers granted annually. Mostly impacts FCS institutions with high numbers of active duty service members (e.g. FSCJ, NWFS).

HB 75 passed two committees favorably and now awaits final approval in the House Education Committee.

SB 460 has passed one committee and will be heard at the Appropriations Sub-committee on Higher Education on January 17 at 1:30pm.

[HB 619](#) by Nunez regarding renaming of Florida College System institutions (compare to [SB 946](#) by Flores, Florida Keys Community College)

Changes name of "Florida Keys Community College" to "The College of the Florida Keys"; changes name of "North Florida Community College" to "North Florida College." Although addressing specific institutions, the debate should be monitored closely for issues related to overall FCS policy issues, especially in light of the news coverage related to the bill.

HB 619 Committee Substitute by Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee read 1st time in House Education Committee.

SB 946 has been referred to Senate Education and Appropriations Committees. It has not been heard.

[SB 1242](#) by Steube regarding weapons carrying (Identical - HB [739](#) by Fant)

concealed weapons permit for carrying a firearm and FS 790.06 places certain restrictions on carry. SB 1242 would allow people to openly carry firearms, including assault weapons, while engaged in a variety of outdoor activities such as fishing, hiking, trapping, biking, boating, etc.

SB 1242 is scheduled to be heard in Senate Judiciary on January 18.

HB 739 has been referred to the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee; Justice Appropriations Subcommittee and the Judiciary Committee. It has not been heard.

[SB 1048](#) by Baxley regarding concealed weapons carry (Identical – [HB 1419](#) by McClure)

This bill would allow churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions to authorize concealed license holders to take their firearms onto their properties. This also means that the designated carrier could take their concealed weapons into schools if the religious institution owns, rents, leases or borrows the property.

SB 1048 is on the agenda for the Senate Judiciary Committee January 18th, 10:00am.

HB 1419 has been referred to the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee. It has not been heard by any committee.

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