



FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

PERCEPTION

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FOR FACC MEMBERS

Issue 3

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PLEASE REFER TO THE LEGISLATIVE ISSUE OF CURRENT OR TO THE FACC WEB PAGE AT www.facc.org FOR AN EXPLANATION OF ISSUES DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT AND FOR OTHER LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION.

Four weeks of session have come to a close and the 2006 Legislative Session will reach its midpoint at the end of this week. Next week, both houses will take much or all of the week off in celebration of Passover and Easter. This week, however, will continue to be fast paced as both sides are expected to finish work on their respective appropriations bills. Not much has changed from the information already sent to FACC members, so far. Lobbyists continue to encourage the Senate to move to the House level of funding, which is around an 8% increase. It should be noted that the percentage increases per college will vary a great deal, as the Council of Presidents agreed upon funding formula continues to address past inequities in funding. At the 8% funding, there are colleges with only 3.5% increases, and some with double digit increases. It is expected that if the Legislature funds the system well, the inequities should be neutralized in four years.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Substantive issues with action last week:

FUNDING OF FOR-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS

[SB 1016 \(Wise\)](#), Financial Aid for independent college students was approved by the **Senate Education Committee** on Tuesday, March 28th. The bill creates Florida Independent Collegiate Assistance (FICA) program, which is a grant program for students at for-profit institutions that offer associates degrees in targeted occupations. As stated previously, the Council of Presidents has an official position opposing this legislation and any others that provide funding to for-profits schools without accountability measures in place. With the help of **Senator Ron Klein**, amendments were adopted by the Senate committee that provided some accountability measures. It continues to be frustrating that legislators are so intent on creating another pot of public funds that will be used to subsidize stockholder dividends and bonuses for corporate officers while Florida ranks 15th out of 16 states in per FTE funding of public community colleges. The house version of the bill, **[HB 387 \(Patterson\)](#)**, is still expected to be heard soon, although it has not been placed on an agenda this coming week. .

CAREER EDUCATION

Career Education was back on the agenda on Tuesday, March 28th. **[SB 2326](#)**, sponsored by **Senator Baker**, was approved by **Senate Education**. As does the House version, **[HB 7097](#)**: creates a Florida Student Assistance Grant program for public certificate programs; creates \$500 scholarships for GED recipients to use for public or private postsecondary education called **SUCCEED GED**; requires DOE to develop educational career paths that facilitate transfer of credit from prior education. **SB 2326** did have sections dealing with SUCCEED grants, but those were amended out. Several amendments supported by the colleges were approved and provided accountability standards for the SUCCEED GED grants. The next stop for **SB 2326** is the

Commerce and Consumer Services Committee. However, it has not yet been placed on the agenda. **HB 7097** is scheduled to be heard April 4th in **Education Appropriations**, and this bill allows School District vocational-technical centers to be called “technical colleges,” provided they have articulation agreements with community colleges that lead to AAS degrees.

PERSONNEL ISSUES

Two bills addressing **per diem and mileage** continue to progress. On Thursday, March 30th, **HB 6001** passed out of the **Fiscal Council**, and will go to the **State Administration Council** before being heard on the floor. **HB 6001** was amended to provide funding to cover the cost of the changes for some agencies. The bill still increases per diem to \$75.00, and meal allowances to \$5.00 for breakfast, \$11.00 for lunch and \$19.00 for dinner. **Senate Bill 428 (Lawson)** is scheduled to be heard April 2nd in the **Ways and Means Committee**, which is the bill’s last stop before the Senate floor. The Senate version sets per diem at \$90.00, with an allowance for annual adjustments, would provide \$5, \$11 and \$23 for meals, also with adjustments annually. Both bills provide for 45 cents per mile.

Another relating to **travel** is of interest to FACC members, **HB 1171** by **Rep. Rivera**, and **SB 2434**, by **Senator Haridopolos**, would prohibit use of any state Community College Program Fund (the basic state funding for the Colleges) resources to pay for travel to a terrorist country. The bills seem to be moving quickly to passage, as the **HB 1171** passed out of the **Community College and Workforce Education Committee** March 21st and is on the **House Education Appropriations Committee** agenda for April 4th. **SB 2434** will be heard April 4th in **Senate Education**.

As mentioned in earlier *Perception*, bills that would increase FRS benefits, **SB 1884 (Jones)** and **HB 1149 (Justice)** are not showing any signs of progress. Neither bill has been placed on an agenda of any of the committees to which they have been referred. Also very telling is that legislative staff analysis has not been conducted. Some action would be required this week for either bill to have any opportunity for passage.

STUDENT ISSUES

Residency and Articulation changes are included in a Committee Bill by the **House Colleges and Universities Committee**, **HB 7257** (Formerly **HCU 1**.) The residency changes do not address the undocumented student issues, but increases the number of acceptable methods by which residency can be documented. College registrars have been asked for input on these changes. **HB 7257** also makes changes to the articulation agreement language, which is being reviewed by the Councils of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. Among the forty-nine amendments that were approved on Tuesday, March 28th, was one that requires a financial penalty for universities who do not follow the state’s articulation agreement. The Bill is predominately related to changes in **governance for the universities**, assigning powers to the Board of Governors.

OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING ISSUES

Seaport Security training is being discussed in **HB 7145** and **SB 190 (Wise)**. These bills both moved out of committees last week, and are on committee agendas again next week (**House Transportation**, April 4th, and **Senate Commerce** April 5th.) The bills specify training and certification, and provide requirements for schools.

HB 771/SB 1630 amend the **Cosmetology** statutes. As previously described, this bill breaks the cosmetology license into 3 separate licenses and changes the related education hours to be: hair technician 1,000 hours; nail technician 350 hours; esthetician 600 hours. All three licenses will result in a cosmetologist license at 1800 hours. **HB 771** will be heard April 4th in the **Community**

Colleges and Workforce Education Committee, and **SB 1630** has not been heard in committee.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS SAW NO ACTION IN WEEK FOUR:

SB 1884 (Jones)/HB 1149 (Justice) increase retirement benefits payable to Regular Class members of the system by increasing the multiplier for years of service from 1.6 to 2.0. FACC has expressed support with the Division of Retirement and legislative staff to encourage retirement issues supported by FACC membership. Unfortunately, under the current legislative and Division of Retirement staff, the impression of huge fiscal impact will negate any chance of passing legislation.

BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

HB 137 (Mayfield) provides that community colleges that grant baccalaureate degrees remain under authority of State Board of Education; requires these colleges to maintain their primary mission and prohibits termination of associate degree programs; provides guidelines & restrictions for setting tuition & out-of-state fees for upper-division courses, restricts funding of facilities etc. to Community College Budget. The bill also restricts funding amounts for such programs. The House bill has already passed committees and is on the calendar to be voted on by the full House. On March 14th, **Senate Bill 1658 (Lynn)** has just one committee of reference remaining (**Education Appropriations**) and is not on the agenda.

STUDENT ISSUES

Residency (for tuition purposes) issues are included in several bills this year. More information will be provided in future issues of *PERCEPTION* but for now the action has focused on **SB 366 (Wilson)/HB 119 (Zapata), the Dream Act**. This bill provides an exemption from payment of nonresident tuition at community colleges and state universities for undocumented students. The bill is intended to address students who have been long term residents of the state, and graduate from Florida high schools, but whose parents are not documented citizens. Both bills have passed their first committees of reference. But remain pending in **Education Appropriations** (House) and **Domestic Security** (Senate).

OTHER NEWS

DISPLACED HOMEMAKER AWARENESS DAY



Eleven Community Colleges participated in a Displaced Homemaker Awareness Day in the Capitol Rotunda on Tuesday, March 28, 2006. Broward, Chipola, FCCJ, Gulf Coast, Indian River, Lake-Sumter, Miami Dade, North Florida, Palm Beach, Santa Fe, and Seminole were represented to disseminate information about their programs funded by the State of Florida Displaced Homemaker Trust Fund. Administration and oversight of these programs is provided by the Agency for Workforce Innovation. (Daytona Beach was unable to participate.)

Community College staff also presented Certificates of Appreciation from the Florida Displaced Homemaker Network Association to ten Legislators to thank them for their continuing support of Displaced Homemaker Programs throughout the state.