



In terms of making progress on the most significant bills, Week Six was quite productive. The budget made significant progress towards the conference stage. The only bill the Legislature HAS to pass is the budget bill so continued progress is important.

Budget Issues

Both Budget bills passed their respective houses during Week Six making way for the appointment of conference committees early in Week Seven. The bills are **HB5001** in the House and **SB 2900** in the Senate. Final numbers in both bills did not change and include:

- Increase in tuition of 6%, which include a tech fee in the House (silence to tech fee in Senate could signify endorsement of a separate technology fee, not part of tuition)
- Overall state funds at a slight increase in the House and slight decrease in Senate.
- \$2 million in First Generation student matching funds in both bills
- Facility matching funds in Senate

On the total State budget, the House and Senate will enter into Conference about \$800 million apart. They face many difficult decisions before they reach agreement.

Governance

As discussed previously, governance bills have moved along rapidly in both houses. The bills establish:

- an elected Commissioner of Education
- a Cabinet level State Board of Education
- revised university trustees and Board of Governors
- a **State Board of Colleges** for the 2 and 4 year colleges that have no graduate degrees.

The Senate Bill, **SB 2308**, passed the Full Senate on March 27 and on April 2, it was sent on to the House for action. The **House Bill, 7025**, has not been discussed recently, but is still expected to pass.



House Speaker Rubio

New Florida College System

The new “State College System” bills are moving in both houses. **CS/CS/SB 1716** passed second reading in the Senate on April 10. There will be one more hearing on the floor before the bill is sent to the House. **HB 7071** passed out of the Policy and Budget committee on April 10. The bills are very similar, and as reported before, they include:

- Creates a new type of college in addition to the existing associate and certificate granting community colleges and community colleges that have also been approved for limited baccalaureate degrees. The new

“state colleges” would offer baccalaureate degrees that address regional and statewide workforce needs versus the local needs that are used to document the need for the limited baccalaureate degrees that some colleges offer now.

- Creates a Task Force to develop a process for approving these state colleges and a funding model with some difference between the two bills as to the makeup of the Task Force.
- Provides for a “pilot program” where **designated colleges would become State Colleges** with some difference as to which colleges are named to the pilot. **The Senate bill now includes six colleges** (St. Petersburg, Okaloosa-Walton, Daytona Beach, Miami Dade, Indian River and Polk). (The House bill does not include Daytona or Polk.)
- Allows for community colleges to change their name to “college” if offering baccalaureate degrees.

Other issues of interest to FACC members

Distance Learning and Technology Fees

Changes to the fees for Distance Learning and Technology have been under discussion and are now available for review.

The **Distance Learning issue** is being discussed via [CS/SB 1762](#) and it will be heard on April 15 in the Senate Higher Education Committee. The bill:

- Establishes the Florida Distance Learning Consortium in law
- Establishes the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog
- Authorizes community colleges and state universities to assess a per credit hour distance learning course fee

The **House Bill, known as [SLC 4](#), passed the Schools and Learning Council on April 8, and it was filed as [HB 7105](#) by the committee.**

More **fee changes** are in a separate bill and allow the community colleges to charge a **5% technology fee** that is similar to that charged by the universities. There are limits to the fee. A requirement for a **student referendum** in support new fees **before a university** can begin collecting the fee (college would not have to do so). [SB 1774](#) passed the Senate on April 9. **The House took the bill up on the floor, but stripped it of all the language and sent it back to the Senate.** It is possible that a separate conference committee will be set up.



Rep. Pickens

Bond Finance

Representative Heller has filed [HB 235](#) and **Senator Oelrich** has filed [SB 696](#) both of which will provide clarity to the **bond finance** laws for community colleges to include:

- Authorizes a board to use any authorized available revenue to repay a debt for any loan, lease-purchase or other contract for a term of up to 5 years
- Authorizes a board of trustees to pledge capital improvement and parking fees to secure repayment of a debt for a term up to 7 years
- Maintains requirement that the Division of Bond Finance issue bonds, up to 20 years

- Provides that revenue bonds may not be secured or paid from tuition, financial aid fees, CCPF, or other operating revenue
- Requires the community college board to authorize all debt incurred by its DSO

The Senate Bill passed the full Senate on the March 27 and it is in House Messages awaiting further action. HB 235 is on Committee agenda for the Policy & Budget Council on April 15. The bill looks good to receive final passage.

Textbook Affordability

HB 603, (Flores) and SB 2350, (Atwater) are seeking to find methods to contain the high cost of textbooks. The bills include:

- Prohibits college or university employees from receiving anything of value in exchange for textbook selection, with exceptions for sample copies, royalties, honoraria, compensation for reviewing, and training.
- Requires posting of required books at least 30 days before the first day of class.
- Requires State Board of Education and Board of Governors to adopt policies, procedures and guidelines to help minimize the cost of textbooks.

HB 603 was placed on the House Calendar on March 25. SB 2350 was placed on the Senate Calendar on April 9. With identical bills on the Calendars, chances of passage are strong.

Firefighting and Inspections

HB 1041 (Garcia) and SB 2388 (Saunders) amends the statutes relating to the work of college fire inspectors, which is causing concern to many colleges. The community college legislative team is working to amend the bill to address those concerns. In addition, the bill creates a new *apprenticeship* program that **can** be offered in high schools. **The House bill had no action recently, and the Senate Bill was last heard April 1.**



Rep. Flores

Foundation

HB 883 (Skidmore) and SB 1576 (Storms) would create the Public Employees' Charitable Campaign for local public employers other than state or federal employees. It authorizes a public employer to conduct a charitable campaign as the sole fundraising drive conducted during work hours. Concern has been expressed by college foundations that the bill could inadvertently disallow Foundation campaigns. Sponsors have been contacted to exempt community college foundations from the bills. **Neither bill has been heard to date.**

Excess Hours

SB 320 (Constantine), which originally dealt only with university fees, includes the excess hours language agreed to by the community colleges. The bill will be heard next in the **Higher Education Appropriations Committee.** Included in the excess hours

- Freshmen who exceed 150% of number of credit hours required to obtain degree to pay increase of 50% per credit hour above normal in-state tuition
- Applies to 1st time college students in Fall 2008 and thereafter
- Community college boards may require counseling and advising for students prior to completion of 24 credits
- Students with in excess of 120% of required hours will be required to meet with advisor to develop educational plan
- DOE to develop a performance based funding methodology to measure and reward policy goals

HB 745 (Precourt) was heard on April 10 in the Policy and Budget Council and passed. Several amendments were included creating a bill that has many components, and many of which are controversial including an excess hours provision. The bill

- Creates **state-level demand pool** for postsecondary education within the enrollment estimating conference; and provides for the allocation of that demand into appropriate public delivery systems.
- Allows **non-Florida corporations** running postsecondary education institutions to have licensure by accreditation
- **Amends the residency statutes** to be more prescriptive and to require institutional determinations
- Includes **provision for excess hours**, but community colleges are not included (except that the community college hours of a transfer student do count). Surcharge at 120 hours (rather than percentage).
- Includes **distance learning courses in state employee fee waivers**

Cosmetology

HB 415 (Carroll) and **SB 996 (Wise)** amend the licensure requirements related to cosmetology. Colleges with cosmetology programs have supported this legislation which will allow students to be trained in specific shorter programs and enter the workforce quickly. **SB 996 will be heard next in the General Government Appropriations Committee on April 15.** **HB 415** has been waiting to be heard in the House Policy and Budget Council.



Rep. Carroll

Radiology

HB 1233 (Garcia) and **SB 2642 (Peaden)** would amend the statutes regulating schools of radiology. These bills, opposed by the national certification association, would allow a school accredited by an alternative association to offer training. **Neither bill has been heard in committee yet, and they are not expected to be heard.**