OUTREACH
Governor Scott Press Conference at the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce

On Friday, January 30, Gov. Scott held a press conference at the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce to discuss his “KEEP FLORIDA WORKING” budget proposal. The governor highlighted several proposed tax cuts, including the elimination of sales tax on college textbooks and a reduction in the communication services (cell phone, cable and satellite TV) tax. Gov. Scott also recognized FAU political science graduate student Ashley Herbert and invited her to address the media to share her thoughts on how these tax cuts would help make her college experience more affordable. In addition, FAU Trustees Anthony Barbar and Tom Workman attended the event as did members of the Boca Raton City Council and students from Lynn University.

GOING FORWARD

There are two interim committee weeks remaining before the beginning of the 2015 Legislative Session in March. On Tuesday, February 10, representatives from the University will be in Tallahassee for FAU Day at the Capitol. The event will create a platform that allows the University to share its successes, engage lawmakers, and increase awareness and understanding of the University’s legislative priorities.

BILLS IN BRIEF

HB 4005 / SB 176 - Licenses to Carry Concealed Weapons or Firearms (Steube / Evers)

The measure would allow an individual to carry a concealed weapon or firearm into a university or college facility.

Last Action: HB 4005 was reported favorably by the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee on January 20. SB 176 has been referred to several Senate committees.
On Wednesday, January 28, Gov. Scott released his FY2015-2016 “KEEP FLORIDA WORKING” budget proposal, which includes more than $673 million in tax cuts and has the highest per-student funding for K-12 education in Florida’s history. The budget totals $77 billion (general revenue is $28.3 billion) and keeps $5.2 billion in reserves. The FY15-16 budget is 0.1 percent below the current $77.1 billion budget.

Higher Education Highlights

- $4.5 billion in total SUS funding ($2.1 billion in state funds, which is an increase of $97.2 million)
- $23.5 million to expand Bright Futures to cover summer credit hours
- No tuition increase
- $400 million for SUS Performance Funding ($100 million in new money, $100 million recurring from FY14-15, and $200 in redirected university base funds)
- $212 million for fixed capital outlay projects at SUS institutions and colleges, including $50 million in new funding for universities and $40 million for colleges to expand STEM education through necessary facility construction and renovation, with a required dollar-for-dollar match; plus $50 million for prioritized maintenance projects at SUS institutions ($12.4 million increase over the current year)
- Eliminating sales tax on college textbooks ($41.4 million per year in estimated savings)

The governor’s budget proposal serves only as a recommendation to the legislature and provides an opportunity for the governor to highlight his budget
priorities for the coming year. However, the Legislature is in no way bound by this document as it will have its own budget proposals that likely will begin with last year’s final budget as a starting point.

This week, the governor’s staff provided a comprehensive overview of the proposal to several of the appropriations committees and subcommittees. A link to the “KEEP FLORIDA WORKING” budget as well as committee packets with budgetary overviews can be found below.

www.keepfloridaworking.com

Senate Appropriations Committee Meeting Packet – February 4, 2015

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education Meeting Packet – February 4, 2015

Public Private Partnerships

A Public Private Partnership (P3) occurs when a public need has been identified, a private funding source exists, and a partnership is formed between the parties to develop and construct a project, establish a payment process, and provide for the eventual ownership of the completed project by the public entity.

Recently, the ability to construct, renovate and maintain educational facilities on SUS campuses has been significantly reduced as a result of declining Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds and the lack of new revenue sources to pay for these projects. During the 2013 Session, the Legislature authorized the use of P3s to meet the infrastructure needs of local governments and school boards. However, SUS institutions were not expressly included in the final version of the 2013 bill that was signed into law. The 2013 legislation also created the Partnership for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Act Guidelines Task Force to recommend guidelines for the Legislature to consider for purposes of creating a uniform P3 process across the state.

On Wednesday, February 4, the House Government Operations Subcommittee considered HB 63, which formally extends the use of P3s to state universities and incorporates many of the recommendations contained in the task force report. For example, the measure requires an entity that is submitting an unsolicited proposal to concurrently submit an application fee to cover the cost of the proposal’s evaluation.
In addition, HB 65 was introduced to encourage private entities to engage in P3 agreements by providing public records exemption designed to protect information contained in an unsolicited proposal from a private entity.

Both measures were reported favorably by the Government Operations Subcommittee. However, Senate companions have not yet been introduced.


FEDERAL ISSUES
President’s FY2016 Federal Budget Request

On Monday, February 2, 2015, President Obama released his $4.066 trillion budget request for fiscal year 2016. Included in the budget is a proposal to break the sequestration process and increase spending for both domestic and defense agencies by $74 billion or 7 percent. The proposal includes a $1.8 billion deficit reduction package that calls for imposing various tax increases on corporate profits and wealthy individuals. Reaction to the President’s proposal has largely fallen along party lines as the House and Senate appropriations committees plan to examine the various agency requests and formulate their own spending proposals for the next fiscal year.

FY2016 Budget Overview Fact Sheet

Please Contact the University Relations staff with any questions and/or comments:
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