

2019 Legislative Session Update

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Budget Conference: What to Expect

This week, the House and Senate full Appropriations Chairs, along with the House Speaker and Senate President, will come up with agreed upon allocations for each area of the budget (education, transportation, health care, etc.). With the House and Senate being \$400 million apart (House is at \$89.9B and Senate is at \$90.3B), we expect them to meet somewhere in the middle.

A balanced budget, otherwise known as the General Appropriations Act (GAA), is the only bill the Legislature is constitutionally mandated to pass during each Legislative Session. Therefore, it is imperative that the Senate and House agree to final allocations. Once those allocations are decided, then Budget Conference begins. This year, the Senate will be the leading the discussion, and the GAA will be passed as Senate Bill 2500. Next year, the House will be the lead, and the GAA will be passed as House Bill 5001, as it alternates each year. Current sitting members on appropriations subcommittees/committees will sit as conferees in their respective appropriations conference committees.

It is expected Budget Conference will begin the week of April 22. The subcommittee chairs will meet behind the scenes and negotiate which items to accept or not accept in order to meet their agreed upon allocations. Then meetings will be called to inform the public of what they have decided. This will occur for a few days, and then any items still left on the table will be bumped up to the full appropriations chairs, Rep. Travis Cummings and Sen. Rob Bradley. They will negotiate, and then any items from that point that are not agreed to will be bumped up to House Speaker José Oliva and Senate President Bill Galvano. Once all items have been resolved, then the GAA is printed and placed on each member's desk to sit for 72 hours. During this time, the budget will be discussed and debated. After the 72 hours have expired, the House and Senate vote on SB 2500. This will confirm the 2019-20 budget.

Congratulations to Indian River State College President Dr. Ed Massey and Miami-Dade College President Dr. Eduardo Padrón for winning the 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence!
Congratulations to Broward College President Greg Haile for being an Aspen Award Top 10 Finalist!



Photo Credit: Dr. Karen Stout—Twitter @drkstout

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

Appropriations

HB 5501: Higher Education/Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)

Sponsor: Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee; Rep. Randy Fine

House Bill 5501 was placed on Special Order to be heard by the House along with HB 5001, the General Appropriations Act, on Wednesday, April 3; however, it was temporarily postponed and is yet to be brought up for consideration. A more detailed summary of the bill can be found [here](#). HB 5501 limits the ability of colleges and universities to transfer state funds to any other fund within the institution (i.e. Fund 1 to Fund 7) or direct support organization (DSO) without specific authorization from the Legislature. Beginning July 1, 2019, college transfers of any state appropriation to DSOs with a fund balance of greater than \$50 million may only include funds pledged for capital projects.

The bill authorizes universities and colleges to use their carry forward funds each year for operations, maintenance, or to finish previously funded PECO projects. While the Division of Florida Colleges currently has a method by which it ranks Fixed Capital Outlay projects, this bill would require the Board of Governors and State Board of Education to develop a points based methodology to rank projects for recommendation for funding.

HB 5501 provides that any new construction, renovation or remodeling project that has not received an appropriation in a previous year may only be considered for the prioritized list if:

- The institution has allocated funding equal to no less than 10 percent (for Colleges), or 15 percent (for State Universities) of the total project cost or the project is needed to preserve the safety of persons using the facility or the project is consistent with a strategic legislative initiative;
- A plan is provided to reserve an amount of funds in an escrow account, specific to the project, into which shall be deposited each year an amount equal to 3 percent of the building's value for future maintenance; and
- There is sufficient PECO cash which is not needed to complete previously funded previously PECO projects.

The bill modifies standards for calculating space needs by colleges and universities. The current utilization rate representing "100% utilized" consists of classrooms that are 60% occupied for 40 hours per week. The bill changes utilization rates for classrooms to 80% occupied for 60 hours per week to be considered fully utilized, and for teaching lab space to be 85% utilized for 40 hours a week.

HB 4909: The Florida College System Self-Insurance Consortium

Sponsor: Rep. Elizabeth Anne Fetterhoff

This bill is an appropriations request on behalf of the Florida College System. Through the FCS self-insurance consortium, the FCS requested support through this bill for extraordinary losses from the last two hurricane seasons along with other losses associated with fires, floods, and tornadoes that impact various colleges over the last few years. The total cost requested is \$18.67M.

Subcommittees are no longer meeting, so the bill is not expected to be heard in the House; however, on Monday, April 1, the appropriation request was placed into the proposed Senate Budget, [SB 2500](#) on page 6—Line Item 18, through an [amendment](#) that was filed by Sen. Rob Bradley, the Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman. It provides \$18,668,823 in nonrecurring funds from the PECO and Debt Service Trust Fund for the Florida College System Risk Management Insurance Consortium. It is expected that this item will come up during Budget Conference.

Dual Enrollment

HB 189 / SB 1342: Postsecondary Education for Secondary Students

Sponsors: Rep. Ardian Zika and Sen. Kelli Stargel

On Tuesday, April 9, the House Education Committee took up House Bill 189 and passed it by a unanimous vote with amendments. According to the [staff analysis](#), these amendments authorize private schools, in addition to charter schools, to establish an early college program with a state college, state university, or other eligible postsecondary institution. The bill now requires instructional materials be made available to private school dual enrollment students, in addition to public school and home education dual enrollment students, free of charge. It also requires the dual enrollment articulation agreement between a public postsecondary institution and a private school to include a provision expressing that costs associated with instructional materials will not be passed along to the student's private school of enrollment. There's also a reporting requirement regarding the total and average number of career dual enrollment clock hours and certificates earned for each dual enrollment articulation agreement it entered into during the previous year. Lastly, the bill allows colleges to request a 1-year waiver, similar to language in SB 1342, from the prohibition on limiting student participation in dual enrollment programs, subject to approval by the Commissioner of Education, for any space/capacity issues.

The bill sponsor, Rep. Zika, again admitted during committee that there would be a cost to colleges. Rep. Fine stated that the Colleges had the funds available to provide for this additional cost.

HB 189 renames the "collegiate high school program" to the "early college acceleration program" and expands the program from 1 to 2 years. It deletes the requirement for a separate early college program contract and requires each dual enrollment articulation agreement between a Florida College System institution and a school district to establish at least one early college program. The bill exempts private schools from paying for tuition for their dual enrolled students. Colleges already absorb the tuition cost for dual enrolled home school students.

Currently, FCS institutions serve close to 3,000 private school dual enrolled students. Most tuition costs for dual enrollment include \$71.98 per credit hour. If the cost per credit hour is multiplied by 3, the cost per course is close to \$216. If the cost for a class is multiplied by 3,000 students, the amount is approximately \$648,000. An estimated number of classes has not yet been identified, but if one student takes a course per semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer), then the colleges would absorb close to \$1,944,000.

HB 189 is now ready to be brought up for consideration by the full House.

On April 9, Senate Bill 1342 was heard in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and passed by a unanimous vote. The bill expands upon HB 189's language. To date, no additional funding has been identified to offset the tuition costs mentioned above. There is \$550,000 in both the House and Senate proposed budgets to help offset some of the home school instructional materials costs. The bill modifies Florida law regarding student eligibility criteria for participating in dual enrollment by changing the GPA requirement from 3.0 to 2.5. It is important to note that current law, Ch. 1007.271(3), Florida Statutes, states student eligibility requirements for initial and continued enrollment in career certificate dual enrollment courses is a 2.0 unweighted high school GPA. Language regarding the 2.5 GPA in SB 1342 only pertains to courses taken for college credit dual enrollment courses. A more in depth summary of SB 1342 can be found [here](#). It has one more stop, full Senate Appropriations, prior to being considered by the full Senate.

Workforce Education

SB 190: Education

Sponsor: Sen. Kelli Stargel

In addition to modifying the requirements associated with the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures program), SB 190 removes the \$15M cap of performance funding for industry certifications to FCS institutions and school district workforce education programs. As a result, FCS institutions and school districts may be fully funded for earned certifications, which is subject to legislative appropriation. Its companion bill, HB 189, does not include this specific workforce language.

Senate Bill 190 has passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. It has not yet been placed on the agenda for full Appropriations, its last committee stop before heading to the Senate Floor.

SB 522: Apprenticeship Programs

Sponsor: Sen. Manny Diaz, Jr.

Senate Bill 522 establishes a new reporting requirement and funding source to expand apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities. Specifically, the bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to report specified information to the Legislature and the State Apprentice Advisory Council regarding apprenticeship and preapprenticeship training in Florida. The bill also requires DOE to provide information on its website explaining how a Florida College System institution or a school district may assume the responsibilities of a local education agency for the purposes of administering an apprenticeship program. This legislation creates the Florida Apprenticeship Grant (FLAG) Program, which provides eligibility for grant awards to registered apprenticeship program sponsors who do not require assistance from a career educational institution. similar FLAG language can be found in [HB 707I](#).

On March 12, SB 522 passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee. **The bill is now on the agenda to be heard on Tuesday, April 16, in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. Its last stop is the full Appropriations Committee at 9:00am.**

HB 661 / SB 770: Alternative High School Graduation Requirements

Sponsor: Rep. Wyman Duggan and Sen. Travis Hutson

House Bill 661 would create a career and technical education (CTE) pathway option that would allow for eligible students to acquire a CTE diploma instead of a traditional standard high school diploma. The courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification. Additionally, the legislation requires principles to meet and discuss with students, who have a cumulative grade point average that falls below 2.0, CTE pathway options.

This bill is yet to be heard in any of its referred committees.

Its companion bill, SB 770, however, is moving through the Senate.

On Wednesday, April 10, the strike-all amendment to SB 770 passed the Senate Innovation, Industry, and Technology Committee by a vote of 9-0. The newly revised bill made some technical changes includes similar CTE pathway option language found in HB 661.

HB 661/SB 770 continued...

SB 770 modifies the 24-credit pathway for earning a standard high school diploma by revising computer science credit substitution for mathematics or science credits, and creates a mechanism for the review of the sufficiency of career education course standards to meet the Algebra I credit requirement. Receipt of a standard high school diploma awarded through the CTE pathway option requires the student's successful completion of at least 18 credits.

The legislation revises the acceleration mechanism component for the school grade calculation for high schools by specifying that dual enrollment courses include career clock-hour dual enrollment courses. **The bill no longer includes the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to enable high school and Florida College System institutions to offer applied learning opportunities for students in high-demand career pathways linked to occupations that will provide students with middle-level and high-level wages. The Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program can only be found in [Senate Bill 1588](#), relating to Enhancing Florida's Workforce, by Sen. Diaz.**

The amended language now includes the "SAIL to 60" Initiative, which can also be found in [HB 7071](#), and creates the Florida Apprenticeship Grant Program to provide competitive grants to expand and enhance apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs.

The bill increases from 15 to 30, the limit on the number of CAPE Digital Tool Certificates that must be identified annually. Additionally, the legislation restores middle grades career education and planning course requirements which were eliminated in 2017, with some modifications.

It requires district school boards to declare a "College and Career Decision Day" to recognize high school seniors and encourage them to prepare for college and pursue advanced career pathways. The bill also requires DOE to provide assistance to specified entities in notifying students, parents, and members of the community about apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities. **Much of the language in SB 770 can also be found in [HB 7055](#) and [HB 7071](#). A more detailed summary of the bill can be found [here](#).**

On March 19, Senate Bill 770 passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee. **Its final stop will be Senate Appropriations.**

HB 7055: Career Education

Sponsors: PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee; Rep. Wyman Duggan; and Rep. Ralph Massullo, Jr.

On April 3, significant portions of HB 7055 were amended onto HB 7071 in the House Education Committee. However, HB 7055, is still moving through the process. It is up for consideration in the House Education Committee on Tuesday, April 16, at 1:30pm. According to legislative staff, HB 7055 was crafted in order to help meet growing workforce demand and provide students flexibility and options to pursue advanced career pathways.

The bill revises the school grades formula to recognize career certificate clock hour dual enrollment and establishes formal career dual enrollment agreements between high schools and career centers. It offsets some high school courses by allowing students with an industry certification to earn two mathematics credits for Algebra I. It also allows for a computer science credit to substitute for a mathematics or science credit and requires a biennial review of career education courses for alignment with high school graduation requirements.

[HB 7055 continued...](#)

The legislation requires the Department of Education to provide assistance in increasing public awareness of apprenticeship and preapprenticeship opportunities and eliminates industry certifications that are not aligned to industry needs.

Similar to SB 770 and HB 7071, HB 7055 establishes a “College and Career Decision Day” to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary education and career plans. It also doubles the cap on career and professional education (CAPE) Digital Tool certificates the State Board of Education may identify for weighted FTE funding and reestablishes a middle grades career planning course requirement.

On March 6, HB 7055 passed unanimously out of the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee. On Monday, March 25, it was heard in the House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee and passed 11-0. **Its next stop, should it pass the House Education Committee, will be the House Chamber.**

[HB 7071: Postsecondary Workforce Education](#)

Sponsor: Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee; Rep. Amber Mariano

House Bill 7071 promotes apprenticeships and creates the “Strengthening Alignment between Industry and Learning (SAIL) to 60” Initiative and establishing a statewide attainment goal to increase the percentage of working-age adults (ages 25-64) who hold a high-value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience to 60 percent by the year 2030. The legislation renames the Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC) as the Florida Talent Development Council, revising its membership, and would require the council to develop a strategic plan for talent development in Florida.

This legislation, similar to SB 522, creates the Florida Apprenticeship Grant (FLAG) Program, subject to an appropriation in the General Appropriation Act (GAA), to provide competitive grants to career centers, charter technical career centers, Florida College System (FCS) institutions, and other entities authorized to sponsor apprenticeship programs for the purpose of expanding existing programs and establishing new apprenticeship programs.

The bill revises the statutory characteristics of an apprenticeable occupation and modifies the requirements for the two public members appointed to the State Apprenticeship Council by the Governor to be independent of any joint or non-joint organizations. It also redefines “journeymen” as “journeyworkers” and includes special provisions for veterans, minorities, and women in apprenticeship programs.

Additionally, statewide articulation agreements must provide for a reverse transfer agreement for FCS AA degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university prior to earning their associate in arts degree. Similar reverse transfer language can be found in [HB 839](#).

House Bill 7071 also requires that each career center and FCS institution with overlapping service areas execute and annually submit to DOE a career pathways agreement for each certificate program offered by the career center.

The bill also requires each school district and FCS institution receiving state appropriations for workforce education programs to maintain adequate and accurate records for funding and expenditures.

[HB 7071 continued...](#)

HB 7071 has passed unanimously out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee and the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee. On April 3, this legislation was heard and passed out of the House Education Committee by a unanimous vote with significant amendments. More details on this legislation can be found [here](#).

[Reverse Transfer](#)

HB 839: Higher Education

Sponsor: Rep. Ray Rodrigues

On April 9, HB 839 passed the House Education Committee by a vote of 14-1 (Rep. Valdes) with 10 amendments. In addition to some amendments to the SUS, the amended language now requires the Commissioner of Education to provide recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Legislature for future consideration on the most efficient process to achieve a complete performance-based, continuous improvement model that provides for the equitable distribution of performance funds to FCS institutions. It also requires that SUS and FCS institutions establish a “2+2” targeted pathway program. The “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement must provide students who graduate with an AA degree and who meet specified requirements guaranteed access to the state university and a baccalaureate degree program at that university.

According to the [staff analysis](#), the bill requires the Board of Governors and the SBE to annually report on the intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity at each SUS and FCS institution by conducting a survey of students, faculty and administrators. The survey must be selected or created by the BOG and the SBE and be objective, non-partisan, and statistically valid. The survey must be used by each institution to assess the extent to which members of the state university and state college community feel comfortable expressing their beliefs and viewpoints on campus and in the classroom. **The first report must be published by September 1, 2020 and annually thereafter.**

This legislation requires that the statewide articulation agreement between the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors provides for a reverse transfer agreement for FCS associate in arts degree-seeking students who transfer to a state university early or prior to earning their associate in arts (AA) degree. If a student earned a majority of the credit hours toward an AA degree from an FCS institution, then the student must be awarded this degree by that FCS institution upon completion of the degree requirements at the state university. Similar reverse transfer language can also be found in [SB 1296](#) by Sen. Diaz, SB 1308, HB 1407, and HB 7071.

HB 839 passed unanimously out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee on March 13. On March 26, the bill was heard and passed the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee with amendments by a vote of 9-2 (Reps. Alexander and Joseph). **It has been placed on the House Special Order Calendar and is expected to be taken up and discussed on Wednesday, April 17.**

Reverse Transfer continued...

SB 1308 / HB 1407: Pathways to College and Career Success / Postsecondary Education

Sponsors: Sen. Keith Perry and Rep. Mel Ponder

On April 9, SB 1308 was heard in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and passed as a Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) by a unanimous vote. The amended reverse transfer language allows This legislation requires the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) to conduct an annual review of career and technical education offerings in the K-12 education system, career centers, and the FCS to determine their alignment with employer demand, postsecondary degree or certificate programs, and industry certifications. As a result of the review, the commissioner must phase out programs not aligned to the needs of employers or do not provide completers with middle- or higher-wage jobs. This review will also encourage school districts and FCS institutions to offer new programs that are in demand by employers.

This legislation allows state university students to request an associate in arts (AA) degree if he or she has completed at least 25 percent of the credits toward an AA at the FCS institution, then the FCS institution will award the degree. The bill also creates the “Last Mile Scholarship” program in the Department of Education (DOE) for the 2019-2020 academic year. The scholarship awards the cost of in-state tuition and fees to Florida residents who are in good standing, have earned credit at a state university or FCS institution within eight years of application, and are within 12 credit hours of completing a first associate or baccalaureate degree. A more detailed staff analysis can be found [here](#).

On March 19, the Senate Education Committee passed SB 1308 by a unanimous vote. **It has one last stop prior to coming to the Floor for a full Senate vote, the full Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 1407 includes the provisions stated above including performance funding for dual enrollment and collegiate high school programs for FCS institutions. This funding is contingent upon a for specific appropriation in the state budget. In this bill, each FCS institution would be provided \$1,000 for each home education and private school student who completes at least one course through a dual enrollment program. Each FLCS institution would also receive \$1,000 for each student who earns an AA degree through a collegiate high school program.

House Bill 1407 has yet to be heard in any of its referred committees.

Direct Support Organizations (DSO)

SB 1744 / HB 705 I: Higher Education

Sponsors: Sen. Dennis Baxley and Rep. Cord Byrd

Senate Bill 1744 requires the State Board of Education to establish criteria for the review and approval of new facilities and programs at Florida College System institutions to ensure the well-planned development, coordination, and operation of the Florida College System and to avoid duplication of facilities or programs.

SB 1744 / HB 705I continued...

This legislation also includes DSO language that would restrict the authority of our local Boards of Trustees to transfer college funds to our foundations for personal services. DSOs would also be restricted from using state funds for travel expenses. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2019, college transfers of any state appropriation to DSOs with a fund balance of greater than \$50 million may only include funds pledged for capital projects. This language is also included in HB 5501.

Additionally, the bill restricts FCS institutions and their DSOs from constructing, accepting, or purchasing property or facilities if general revenue funds will be required for operation or maintenance upon project completion or in subsequent years of operation, unless the Legislature grants approval. Also included in SB 1744 and HB 705I is the prohibition of FCS boards of trustees to authorize the use of state funds for travel expenses by any FCS institution DSO.

SB 1744 would require the Commissioner of Education to report to the State Board of Education any findings by the Auditor General that a district school board or Florida College System institution is acting without statutory authority or contrary to state law. The State Board of Education shall require the district school board or Florida College System institution board of trustees to document compliance with the law.

In addition to the content included in SB 1744, HB 705I would require all FCS institutions to report annually to the Legislature the amount of state appropriations transferred to any DSO during the previous fiscal year, the purpose for which the funds were transferred and the remaining balance of any funds transferred.

SB 1744 has not yet been placed on the Senate Education Committee, its first committee of reference. It has two additional committee stops, as well—Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and full Appropriations.

HB 705I has passed the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee, House Public Integrity & Ethics Committee, and House Education Committee without opposition. **On April 11, HB 705I passed the House 114-0. Since SB 1744, its companion bill, has not received a hearing in the Senate, the House Bill will have to be referred and heard in Senate Committees prior to coming before the full Senate for a vote. A more detailed analysis on HB 705I can be found [here](#).**

Articulation

SB 194: Higher Education

Sponsors: Sen. Kelli Stargel

On March 19, the Senate Education Committee unanimously passed SB 194, legislation that would establish the “2+2” targeted pathway program. Specifically, the bill requires that by the 2019-2020 academic year, each college must execute at least one “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement with one or more state universities. In the same token, each state university must execute at least one “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement with one or more colleges. The legislation requires the “2+2” targeted pathway articulation agreement to provide students who graduate with an AA degree and who meet specified requirements guaranteed access to the state university and a baccalaureate degree program at that university, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

[SB 194 continued...](#)

Senate Bill 194 has been placed on the agenda for the **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education** and is expected to be heard on **Tuesday, April 16, at 9am**. Its final committee of reference is full Appropriations.

[Intercollegiate Athletics](#)

[HB 789 / SB 798: Florida College System Institutions Offering Baccalaureate Degree Programs / Baccalaureate Degree Access](#)

Sponsors: Rep. Rene Plasencia and Sen. Debbie Mayfield

HB 789 and SB 798 authorize FCS institutions that offer one or more baccalaureate degree programs the ability to participate in 4-year intercollegiate athletics. The bills would allow students enrolled in a 4-year baccalaureate program at an FCS institution to compete in their sport for 4-years without having to transfer to another institution. Additionally, under the governance of a four-year athletic governing body, a college's athletic program could offer additional scholarships based on the governing body's guidelines.

HB 789 passed out of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Subcommittee and the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee by unanimous votes. Its last committee of reference is the House Education Committee.

SB 798 was heard in the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, April 2, and passed by a unanimous vote. **It has been placed on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education agenda and is expected to be heard on Tuesday, April 16, at 9:00am. Its last stop is full Appropriations.**

[Military / Veterans](#)

[HB 217 / SB 442: Postsecondary Education for Certain Military Personnel](#)

Sponsors: Reps. Adam Hattersley & Mel Ponder and Sen. Tom Lee

This legislation would require the Board of Governors to adopt regulations and the State Board of Education to adopt rules to create a uniform system to enable servicemembers and veterans of the United States Armed Forces to earn academic college credit at public postsecondary educational institutions for college-level training, education, and experience acquired in the military. The legislation would authorize an institution to award credit even if it is not for the purpose of earning a degree or certification.

It would also require state universities, FCS institutions, career centers operated by a school district, and charter technical centers to waive the transcript fee for active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces, and their spouses and dependents.

Both HB 217 and SB 442 have each passed their referred committees by unanimous votes. They are now ready to be brought up for consideration on each respective Chamber's Floor.

Military / Veterans continued...

HB 501 / SB 1518: Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans

Sponsors: Rep. Mel Ponder and Sen. Tom Wright

This legislation permits the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to contract with a state university or Florida College System institution to provide alternative treatment options for veterans who have been certified by the VA, or any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, as having a Traumatic Brain Injury or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Additionally, the bill requires alternative treatment services to be provided under the direction and supervision of a licensed physician, osteopathic physician, chiropractic physician, nurse, psychologist, or a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist or mental health counselor. The alternative treatment options include: accelerated resolution therapy, equine therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, music therapy, and service animal training therapy.

On April 9, HB 501 was amended and passed the House Health & Human Services Committee by a unanimous vote. The revised version adds hyperbaric oxygen therapy to the alternative treatment options available to eligible veterans. The bill also adds military sexual trauma that has led to PTSD to the list of ailments by which veterans are suffering and who could be eligible for alternative therapy treatments.

Also heard on Tuesday was SB 1518. It passed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services as a strike-all. It still contains the same content as HB 501 but adds a nurse as an authorized individual to supervise the alternative treatment services. Its final stop is full Appropriations prior to being considered by the full Senate.

Charter Schools

HB 1197 / SB 1668: Charter Schools / School Choice

Sponsors: Rep. Jason Fischer and Sen. Travis Hutson

House Bill 1197 authorizes state universities and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to sponsor charter schools. Present limitations on charter schools operated by an FCS institution with a teacher preparation program are repealed. The bill provides that the board of trustees of a sponsoring state university or FCS institution is a local educational agency for the purpose of receiving federal funds and accepting responsibility for all requirements in the role.

The legislation also establishes operational funding and capital outlay funding formulas for charter schools sponsored by a state university and FCS institution.

On April 2, the House Appropriations Committee heard and passed HB 1197 but not without debate. Some members stated their concern for bypassing local school district boards and going directly to the State Board of Education for charter school approval. The final vote was 19-10, along party lines. On March 19, the House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee passed HB 1197 by a vote of 12-2 (Reps. Fernandez & Goff-Marcil). **HB 1197 has been placed on the House Education Committee agenda and inspected to be heard on Tuesday, April 16 at 1:30pm.**

Senate Bill 1668 has not yet been placed on a committee agenda. It has three stops: Senate Education, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and Appropriations.

Fee Waivers

HB 593 / SB 1164: Postsecondary Fee Waivers

Sponsors: Rep. Jay Trumbull and Sen. George Gainer

On April 9, HB 593 was amended to allow FCS institutions that choose to implement the out-of-state fee waiver, may do so for a period of 3 years, beginning 180 days after the impact of the hurricane. This language matches with what's currently in SB 1164.

The legislation would authorize FCS institutions that serve counties directly impacted by a hurricane, and who experience an enrollment decrease by more than 10 percent as a result, to waive out-of-state fees. FCS students who qualify for the waiver are eligible to receive the waiver for up to 110 percent of the total number of credit hours required for the degree or certificate program in which the student is enrolled.

It also provides that a student only remains eligible to receive the out-of-state fee waiver if he or she does not disenroll from the institution for more than one semester, and out-of-state students enrolled under this fee waiver would not be included in the enrollment totals for these institutions by the Education Estimating Conference on Florida College System enrollment.

This legislation was drafted to assist FCS institutions serving in Hurricane Michael affected counties and are experiencing enrollment reductions as a result of the hurricane's widespread damage. The out-of-state fee waiver can assist affected FCS institutions to recruit out-of-state students to the institution.

The following Florida College System (FCS) institutions serve Hurricane Michael affected counties:

- Chipola College (Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, and Washington counties).
- Gulf Coast State College (Bay, Franklin and Gulf counties).
- North Florida Community College (Taylor County).
- Tallahassee Community College (Gadsden, Leon, and Wakulla counties).

Of the four colleges serving Hurricane Michael impacted counties, Chipola College and Gulf Coast State College reported decreases in enrollment for Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters.

HB 593 has been placed on the House Special Order Calendar and is expected to be brought up for consideration on Wednesday, April 17. SB 1164 is on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education agenda for Tuesday, April 16, at 9:00am. SB 1164 will have one more stop, full Senate Appropriations.

Public Records

HB 7115: Public Records and Meetings/Postsecondary Education Executive Search

Sponsors: House State Affairs Committee and Rep. Blaise Ingolia

House Bill 7115 would keep from the public the names of those who would be applying for president and provost positions at state colleges and universities. Similar legislation was filed by the House in 2017 but was never considered by the Senate. The names of those who applied but did not make it for final interviews would not be made public.

HB 7115 continued...

The names of any applicants who become finalists must be released by the state university or FCS institution no later than 30 days before the date of the meeting at which a final action or vote is to be taken on the employment of the applicants. There were numerous members of the public, many who are faculty members, who spoke in opposition to the bill. An analysis on this bill can be found [here](#).

PCB SAC 19-02 was heard by the House State Affairs Committee on Thursday, April 4. It passed unanimously and became HB 7115. **The bill is now slated to be heard in the House Education Committee on Tuesday, April 16, at 1:30pm.**

Free Expression

On Friday, the FCS Council of Presidents came together and approved a statement that supports free expression. This statement aligns similarly to the statement supported by the Board of Governors. Governor Ron DeSantis planned to hold a press conference on Monday at Florida State University with some SUS and FCS Presidents in attendance to reaffirm that each postsecondary institution has the responsibility to create a safe environment where all forms of expression can be proffered.

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