

Dear Friend of USF,

With the redistricting process drawing to a close—at least in the Legislative arena—the Legislature has begun to turn their attention towards crafting a state budget for State Fiscal Year 2012-2013. The House has already released its initial proposed spending plan and intends to debate their version in full House Session later this week.

The House's proposed spending plan for higher education is, in many ways, reflective of the state of Florida's economy in that it is not as robust as we might hope, but it is improving over recent years. Regrettably, continuing the recent trend, the House is proposing another round of reductions of state general revenue funding from our state universities. The total reduction in state funds under the House plan would be approximately \$146 million (about 7.5%). The House also proposes using nearly \$80 million in nonrecurring revenue from the Florida Lottery and other gambling revenue sources to replace recurring base state support in the State University System. The effect of this fund transfer to nonrecurring revenue would be that absent legislative intervention in the spring 2013 Legislative Session, the State University System would automatically lose that \$80 million from their base budgets in future years. It would also require universities to be cognizant during the 2012-2013 school year regarding what they expend those funds on—prioritizing those funds mostly towards one-time items so as not to commit funds that are slated to disappear in future years towards long-term, recurring expenses (such as hiring new faculty).

However, the House budget does propose to fill the vast majority of those reductions with new tuition revenue. The House is proposing an 8% across-the-board increase in tuition for all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. They are also budgeting under the assumption that each university will utilize its existing local authority to raise the undergraduate-only "tuition differential" fee by an additional 7% (for a total tuition increase of 15% for undergraduate programs). If each university were to enact, and the Board of Governors approve, the full 7% differential as assumed in the House budget, the majority of those reductions in state funds would be offset by this new revenue derived from higher student fees.

You may have read Governor Scott's recent comments in response to the House budget proposal (Tampa Bay Times - Feb. 1 - <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/college/gov-rick-scott-says-he-will-reject-a-tuition-hike/1213182>, and Feb. 5 - <http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/editorials/florida-cant-afford-to-keep-being-cheap/1213884>, and Tampa Tribune - <http://www.2tbo.com/news/education-news/2012/feb/02/tuition-hikes-wear-thin-ar-354060/>) expressing his opposition to any new tuition hikes. The Governor's proposed budget for 2012-2013 recommended keeping state funding for state universities at relatively the same level it is this year, but provided for no tuition increases. It will be interesting to see how this situation is resolved as the Session progresses. One thing is certain, however. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for the USF System and the other state universities to absorb another year of state funding cuts of the magnitude proposed by the House budget without major interruptions in programs and services to students and faculty unless some additional revenue, such as higher tuition revenue, is provided to offset those cuts.

The Florida Senate has taken a slower approach to crafting their budget proposal. We expect to see the Senate release and begin to workshop their proposed budget this week and we will be sure to keep you updated on the full budget process as it unfolds further.

Many of you have inquired about the future of the USF Polytechnic campus following the Board of Governors' decision in November to put it on a path to becoming an independent institution. We have included a link below to a recent special communication from President Genshaft to the USF Community about that issue. We invite you to read her remarks on that project by clicking on the provided link.

Thanks for your time and support. And please feel free to send us your feedback ([govrelations@usf.edu](mailto:govrelations@usf.edu)), as we always enjoy hearing your thoughts and ideas.

**Mark Walsh**  
Assistant VP for Government Relations for the USF System

**GENSHAFT RELEASES STATEMENT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF USF POLYTECHNIC**

Read the text of President Judy Genshaft's statement about the future of USF Polytechnic.

Click here: <http://news.usf.edu/article/templates?a=4138&z=157>



**USF Interns are gaining real-life public policy experience in Tallahassee**

Ten students (pictured above) who are participating in USF's Tallahassee Internship Program are now working directly with members of the Florida House and Senate in Tallahassee to learn firsthand how public policy is made at the state level during the annual 60-day Legislative Session. The Program, which is a partnership between the USF Community Initiative, Alumni Association and Florida Institute of Government, earns students not only a great personal learning experience but also twelve course credit hours during the spring semester.

Student interns benefit from hands-on participation in the legislative process and interactions with Floridians who are influencing public policy every day. The interns also attend weekly lectures by high profile members of Florida Government. This year, the USF interns will have an opportunity for small-group learning sessions with (in order of scheduled appearance) Governor's Office Budget Director Jerry McDaniel, Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court Charles Canady, Florida Secretary of State Kurt Browning (a USF alumnus), Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi (a former USF student), and the Chancellor of the State University System of Florida Frank Brogan.

The Tallahassee Internship Program, and USF's other legislative and government internship programs, have been tremendous successes over the years as graduates use the experience they gain in their lives after USF. Some of the graduates also use the experience they gain to go on to work in government. One of the program's recent graduates and USF alumnus, Ryan Metcalf, is currently working as a senior correspondence analyst in the Office of Presidential Correspondence at the White House.

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<http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/home/>

**BILLS IN BRIEF**

(*SB = Senate Bill; HB = House Bill*)

**HB 5201 BY REP. O'TOOLE**

**Summary:** This bill implements some of the law changes that coincide with the House's proposed funding plan for Higher Education for 2012-13. Some of the major changes included in the bill that impact universities are that it:

- 1) Creates a "Florida Virtual Campus" clearinghouse of online courses, degree programs and library resources across the state university and Florida College systems;
- 2) Establishes a degree completion pilot project with USF as a lead institution that will target active duty military members, veterans and other adult students who have completed some college course work but stopped before receiving their degree; and
- 3) Shortens, from 3 to 2 years, the amount of time that a student must accept his/her Bright Futures Scholarship after high school graduation and raises the college GPA standards that must be achieved in order to retain the scholarship for the following school year.

**LATEST ACTION:**

Placed on House calendar for consideration by the full House this week.

HB 5201 Link: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/issues/alert/?alertid=60962121&PROCESS=Read+More>

**SB 94 BY SEN. FASANO AND HB 45 BY REP. SMITH**

**Summary:** These bills require state universities and Florida Colleges that offer priority course registration for any segment of their student population to offer priority course registration for veterans or their dependents who are receiving education benefits under the GI Bill.

**LATEST ACTION:**

SENATE BILL--Passed by the Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee on January 12th. Now in Senate Budget Committee for a final committee hearing.

HOUSE BILL--Passed by the House Education Committee on February 7th. Now headed for full House consideration.

SB 94 / HB 45 Link: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/issues/alert/?alertid=59651501>

**SB 1156 BY SEN. FLORES**

**Summary:** This bill allows the state universities' Capital Improvement Trust Fund (CITF) fee to be indexed to tuition instead of a dollar amount set in statute. The statutory cap for the fee has not been raised since the 1980s. It provides that an increase in the CITF fee must be approved by a committee consisting of at least 50% students appointed by the student body president. CITF fee revenue is used to construct non-instructional campus life facilities, such as student centers.

**LATEST ACTION:** Placed on agenda for the February 9th meeting of the Higher Education Committee.

SB 1156 Link: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/issues/alert/?alertid=59653501>

**SB 1560 BY SEN. THRASHER**

**Summary:** This bill would prohibit a sitting member of the Legislature from being employed by or having a contractual relationship with any state university or Florida College. It would also prohibit a former legislator from becoming employed by or entering into a contractual relationship with one of those institutions for at least two years after leaving the Legislature.

**LATEST ACTION:** Approved by the Subcommittee on Ethics & Elections on January 23rd by a 7-6 vote. Now in Rules Committee.

SB 1560 Link: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/issues/alert/?alertid=59654501>

**CONTACT YOUR SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE**

To locate contact information for your local Florida State Senator and Representative, using your home address, click here: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/directory/statedir.tt?state=FL&lvl=state>

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

To send us your feedback or ideas, email: [govrelations@usf.edu](mailto:govrelations@usf.edu)