

STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM

CS/CS/SB 1716 — The Florida College System

by Higher Education Appropriations Committee; Higher Education Committee; and Senators Oelrich, Gaetz, and Lynn

The Florida College System

This bill creates the Florida College System comprised of public postsecondary educational institutions that grant 2-year and 4-year academic degrees at the undergraduate level. The bill permits a community college to change the institution's name and use the term "college," if it has been granted the authority to award baccalaureate degrees or the local board of trustees and the State Board of Education approve the name change. If the State Board of Education approves the name change, the college must enter into an agreement with the State Board to:

- Maintain the college's primary mission of responding to community needs for postsecondary education;
- Maintain an open door policy;
- Provide outreach to underserved populations;
- Provide remedial education; and
- Comply with the statewide articulation agreement that relates to 2-year and 4-year public degree-granting institutions.

The Florida College System Task Force

The Florida College System Task Force is established within the Division of Community Colleges in the Department of Education to make recommendations regarding the transition of community colleges to baccalaureate-degree granting colleges and the criteria for establishing and funding state colleges. The Commissioner of Education, who would serve as the chairman of the task force, must appoint 11 members to the task force, including seven community college presidents, one state university president, two presidents of private postsecondary baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions, and one member at large. The community college presidents appointed to the task force may not include the presidents appointed to participate in the State College Pilot Project. The task force must:

- Recommend a program-approval process for new baccalaureate degree programs at a community colleges and at state colleges;

- Recommend a new funding model for these institutions;
- Identify statewide needs for baccalaureate degrees;
- Monitor the State College Pilot Project; and
- Recommend priorities and criteria for baccalaureate programs that may be offered by these institutions without specific approval by the State Board of Education.

By March 2, 2009, the task force must submit a report and recommendations to the Governor, State Board of Education, and Legislative leaders. A recommendation from the task force to the Legislature must be passed by a three-fourths vote of the membership. The task force must submit a final report with recommendations before June 30, 2010, at which time the task force would be dissolved.

The State College Pilot Project

The State College Pilot Project is created to recommend to the Legislature:

- An approval process for the transition of baccalaureate-degree granting community colleges to state colleges in order to meet the state's employment needs;
- Criteria for institutions in the Florida College System to transition to state colleges; and
- A funding model for state colleges.

Nine colleges would participate in the pilot project: Chipola College, Daytona Beach College, Edison College, Indian River College, Miami Dade College, Okaloosa-Walton College, Polk College, Santa Fe College, and St. Petersburg College. The participating institutions must:

- Maintain the institution's primary mission to respond to community needs for postsecondary academic education and career education;
- Maintain an open-door admissions policy for associate-level degree programs and workforce education;
- Provide outreach to underserved populations;
- Provide remedial education;
- Comply with all the provisions of the statewide articulation agreement; and
- Deliver the programs in a cost effective manner.

Participating colleges are prohibited from participating in intercollegiate athletics beyond the 2-year level and from offering graduate degrees or graduate credit.

The participating colleges must require successful completion of the college-level communication and mathematics skills examination (CLAST) as a condition for admission to upper division programs unless the student has been awarded an associate degree from a community college or a state university. A student admitted into the upper division program at these institutions must also take the CLAST unless the student has previously obtained a passing score. The participating institutions must report each student's CLAST score to the Florida College System Task Force, State Board of Education, and the Legislature's Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability for the purpose of a longitudinal analysis of the CLAST.

The task force must collaborate with the Florida College System Task Force to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Legislature regarding specific issues that should be addressed in the transition of a community college to a state college, provided that any such recommendation is approved by two-thirds of the participating institutions. The final report of the task force must be issued by January 1, 2009.

College Designations

The bill renames Broward Community College, Daytona Beach Community College, Indian River Community College, Polk Community College, and Santa Fe Community College as Broward College, Daytona Beach College, Indian River College, Polk College, and Santa Fe College, respectively.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 97-10

TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY

HB 603 — Textbook Affordability

by Rep. Flores and others (CS/SB 2350 by Higher Education Appropriations Committee and Senators Atwater, Haridopolos, Baker, Lynn, and Crist)

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Board of Governors (BOG) to adopt policies by March 1, 2009, to further efforts to minimize the cost of textbooks for community college and state university students. These policies must include:

- Sufficient time for bookstores to confirm textbook availability, including the availability of used books;
- Confirmation, as part of the adoption process, that all required bundled materials would be used;
- Confirmation, as part of the adoption process, of the extent to which the new edition differs substantially from the earlier editions; and

- Ways to provide required textbooks to students who could not otherwise afford them.

The bill prohibits employees of a community college or state university from demanding or receiving any payment or anything of value in exchange for requiring a student to purchase a specific textbook for coursework and instruction. The bill provides exceptions for sample copies, royalties for one's own work, honoraria for review of course materials and supporting materials, and training in the use of course materials. An instructor is prohibited from selling materials that are marked as sample not for resale.

The bill requires community colleges and state universities to post on their websites at least 30 days before the first day of class the books that would be required for each course. The SBE and BOG must adopt policies for textbook notification for classes added after the notification deadline.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

STATE UNIVERSITIES

SB 186 — University of South Florida Polytechnic

by Senators Alexander and Baker

This bill designates the Lakeland campus of the University of South Florida (USF) as the "University of South Florida Polytechnic," which would be administered by a separate campus board and executive officer. The campus board would be comprised of four residents of the Polytechnic campus service area appointed by the USF Board of Trustees and one member of the USF Board of Trustees selected by that board. Members of the campus board would have the power to:

- Review and approve an annual legislative budget request to be submitted to the USF Board of Trustees;
- Approve and submit an annual operating plan and budget for review and consultation with the USF Board of Trustees;
- Enter into central support services contracts with the USF Board of Trustees for any services that the Polytechnic campus could not provide more economically, such as payroll processing, accounting, technology, and construction administration; and
- Enter into a central services contract with USF for all legal services.

The bill provides for USF Polytechnic to apply for accreditation from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools if separate accreditation is in the

best interest of the campus. The campus board would have to ensure that sufficient student enrollment, faculty and administration were in place before requesting that the USF Board of Trustees apply for separate accreditation for USF Polytechnic.

The USF president would appoint the USF Polytechnic campus executive officer. The campus executive officer may:

- Administer campus operations within the annual operating budget as approved by the campus board;
- Recommend to the campus board an annual legislative budget request; an annual campus operating budget; and appropriate services, terms, and conditions for the annual support services contract; and
- Carry out additional responsibilities assigned by the USF president.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 119-0

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CS/CS/SB 696 — Community College Finance

by Higher Education Appropriations Committee; Higher Education Committee; and Senators Oelrich, Gaetz, and Lynn

Short-term and Long-term Debt Financing

The bill revises each community college board of trustees' authority to enter into debt by providing different requirements for short-term and long-term debt.

The bill limits the authority of community college district boards of trustees to enter into short-term financing for the purchase, sale, lease, license, or acquisition of goods, materials, and services required by the community college to five years or less. The financing must be subject to an annual appropriation by the board of trustees.

The boards of trustees may incur long-term debt for a term up to seven years, through the use of promissory notes, installment sales agreements, lease-purchase agreements, certificates of participation (COPS), and other long-term financing arrangements backed by authorized capital improvement and parking fees.

Capital Improvement Fees

The bill requires a community college board of trustees to use the Division of Bond Finance to issue long term revenue bonds pledged by capital improvement fees. The division may pledge

capital improvement fees collected by participating community colleges to secure the bonds. The community college district boards of trustees are not required to use the division if the board pledges capital improvement fee revenues for the repayment of debt of less than seven years in duration.

Community College Operating Revenue

The bill provides that revenue bonds may not be secured by or paid from, directly or indirectly, tuition, financial aid fees, the Community College Program Fund, or any other operating revenue of a community college.

Community College Direct-Support Organizations

The bill requires a community college board of trustees to authorize all debt incurred by a direct support organization. The board of trustees may delegate short-term loans and lease-purchase agreements to the direct support organization if the terms of the agreements are five years or less. Revenues of a community college may not be pledged to debt issued by a direct support organization.

College Designations

The bill also renames Daytona Beach Community College as Daytona Beach College and Indian River Community College as Indian River College.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

