INTRODUCTION
The newly formed University Relations Office would like to welcome you to the FAU Legislative Update. The mission of Florida Atlantic University’s Community Engagement Division, Office of University Relations, is to promote and reinforce FAU as a valued and trusted partner; to advocate for the University at all government jurisdictional levels; and to facilitate partnerships with business, economic development and nonprofit organizations.

Our goal with the Legislative Update is to keep members of the University community informed about the legislative, executive and judicial issues that may potentially impact Florida Atlantic University and the State University System (SUS). Throughout the 2013 Legislative Session and the preceding Committee Weeks, the University Relations Department will be sending out periodic updates that highlight important legislation, relevant news and the University’s advocacy efforts.

It is our hope that these Updates become part of a dialogue, and we look forward to your feedback. If there is a particular piece of legislation that we should be monitoring, a Member we should be talking with or a report or news story that should be reviewed, please contact us. If you have questions or suggestions regarding the Updates and the issues being covered, please also share those with us and we will make every effort to accommodate your requests.

Please email us at universityrelation@fau.edu

FEEDBACK
Please Contact the University Relations staff with any questions and/or comments: universityrelations@fau.edu

COMMITTEE WEEK ROUNDUP

Florida Retirement System

On Wednesday, January 16, 2013, the Government Operations Subcommittee heard a presentation by the Department of Management Services, Division of Retirement regarding the Florida Retirement System (FRS).

The Division of Retirement gave a broad overview of
the FRS and discussed the differences that exist between the Pension and Investment Plans. In addition to these updates, the presentation highlighted the changes that have taken place since the adoption of a 2011 law that made significant reforms to the FRS.

As a result of the 2011 law, Pension Plan members initially enrolled on or after July 1, 2011:

- vest after eight years (instead of six);
- reach normal retirement after 30 years of service (instead of 25);
- have benefits calculated using the highest eight years of service (instead of five);
- have no post-retirement cost-of-living adjustment; and
- are required to contribute 3 percent of their salary on a pre-tax basis.

As many of you know, the Florida Education Association (FEA) challenged the 2011 pension reform law. The FEA argued that the mandatory employee contributions amounted to an involuntary pay cut that could not be imposed without collective bargaining. This week, the Supreme Court, in a 4 to 3 decision, ruled in favor of the State and upheld the 2011 pension reform law. The outcome of this Supreme Court case allows the State to retain over $900 million it had previously collected from state employees.

Meeting Packet and Florida Supreme Court Decision.

Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)

On Thursday, January 17, 2013, the House Appropriations Committee heard presentations from several speakers, including Dr. Judy Bense (President of UWF and SUS Facilities Task Force Chair), regarding the PECO program, the State’s traditional funding source for education related construction and maintenance.

One presentation focused on PECO’s current status, including how the decline in the State Gross Receipts Tax (Gas, Electricity, Communications) has had significant impacts on the PECO program and all but eliminated new PECO appropriations. In fact, as a result of incorrect forecasting, $120 million is General Revenue and $130 million dollars in lottery proceeds were needed to back-fill appropriations from FY 2008-09 and 2010-11.

An OPPAGA analyst presented on the revenues and financing methods used by other states to fund Public University Capital Outlay Projects. States are using a
multitude of debt and revenue sources to finance capital projects, including:

- 7 States (including FL) use a dedicated source of State Revenue to fund projects;
- 31 States have relied on General State Revenues to fund projects;
- 5 States require universities to match a percentage of State funds;
- 12 States have not provided any State funding for projects;
- 27 States allow their university systems to issue debt for project;
- 34 States allow institutions to issue their own debt to finance projects; and
- 30 States reported that their universities public-private partnerships (P3) to support projects.

Dr. Bense presented the Board of Governors Higher Education Facilities Task Force Recommendations. The task force has come up with 5 recommendations to assist our State universities in dealing with the lack of PECO appropriation dollars. The recommendations include:

- removing the fixed increase cap from the Universities’ Capital Improvement Fees and modifying the Fee percentage to be on par with the State colleges.
- redirecting other tax revenue to supplement PECO;
- supporting deferred maintenance for the renovation and repair of critical facilities and infrastructure by eliminating statutory ambiguity and $50 million in 2013 legislative budget request;
- deregulating university construction to provide greater flexibility in university capital funding;
- enhancing and maximizing mutually beneficial public private partnerships;
- streamlining the Campus Development Agreement process to resolve concurrency issues.

Flexibility in funding maintenance and capital improvements is a crucial component in our toolbox and we will be carefully monitoring the legislation that relates to these issues.

Meeting Packet
Developmental Education in Florida

On Tuesday, January 15, 2013, the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee heard presentations from several speakers, including Randy Hanna (Chancellor of the Florida College System) and Linda Howdyshell (Senior Vice President for Academics and Student Success at Broward College). The presentations centered on the current state of developmental education in Florida.

The Florida College System is “open access” at the associate degree level, which means that students with standard high school diplomas or GEDs are eligible for admission. However, degree seeking students must take placement assessments or present college-ready scores. Students who do not meet college ready-scores must enroll in developmental education or adult education in the subject area of deficiency. The Florida College System and Florida A&M University are authorized to deliver developmental education. These developmental education courses are billed at standard tuition rates but do not fulfill degree requirements.

Nationally, more than 50 percent of students begin in remediation. Of that 50 percent, only 40 percent complete remedial courses and less than 10 percent graduate in three years. In Broward County, 75 percent of students begin in remediation. About 40 percent complete all required remediation and 12 percent graduate within 3 years.

The State is looking at ways to “develop” a bridge to success. By ensuring that students are correctly assessed and placed, accelerated through developmental education courses early in the college career, and are ensured success in later stage coursework, the state can reduce the dependency on developmental education and increase graduation rates.

Florida Supervisors of Elections

On Tuesday, January 15, 2013, the Ethics and Elections Subcommittee heard presentations from a number of Supervisors of Elections. Included in this group of presenters was Vicki Davis from Martin County, Gertrude Walker from St. Lucie County and Susan Bucher from Palm Beach County.

Prior to testifying before the Subcommittee, each Elections Supervisor was given a questionnaire that was prepared by the Senate in the aftermath of the November 2012 elections. The questions touched on a number of topics including ballots, budgets, voting sites, equipment, staffing, wait times and reporting. The Committee plans to use the answers and testimony provided by the Supervisors as they
consider reforms to our elections and voting processes. Consensus seems to be forming among legislators to increase early voting hours.

**Meeting Packet**

**Meeting with Members of our Delegation**

FAU's six county service region has a legislative delegation consisting of over 40 members of the House and Senate. The University Relations Department has met with many members of the delegation, with a goal of sitting down with every member of our service area prior to the start of the Legislative Session in March.

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**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**Board of Governors Meeting – January 16-17, 2013 – Gainesville, FL**

The Florida Board of Governors (BOG) held their first meeting of 2013 this week in Gainesville. The meeting centered the Board’s continuing efforts to develop a performance-based funding model. The Board hopes to steer universities toward excellence through accountability. The discussion revolved around proposed metrics to track progress, which include the percentage of graduates who get jobs after graduation or continue their education, cost-per-degree, wages of graduates, graduation rates, academic progress rates, degrees awarded in areas of strategic emphasis, and university access rate.

The Board of Governors also reappointed Thomas Workman, Jr. to the FAU Board of Trustees. Mr. Workman’s reappointment is subject to Senate confirmation. In addition, Anthony Barbar has become the new Chair of the FAU Board of Trustees.

Governor Rick Scott announced the appointments of Harry “Wayne” Huizenga Jr., Ned C. Lautenbach, Alan M. Levine, Wendy S. Link and Edward A. Morton to the Board of Governors of the State University System. The new members participated in this week’s BOG meeting in Gainesville.


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**OUTREACH**

†Who is Visiting FAU’s Campuses
On January 9, 2013, the Boca Raton Campus hosted State Rep. George Moraitis and community activist Justin Sayfie. The visitors toured the College of Engineering, the College of Medicine and the College of Business.

On January 11, 2013, the Jupiter Campus hosted State Rep. MaryLynn Magar. Rep. Magar toured the entire campus and was able to spend time inside the Honors College, chatting with student leaders in the Burrow, and talking with faculty in the newly renovated neuroscience laboratories.

These tours provide a wonderful opportunity for our elected officials to witness firsthand our amazing students and faculty, the innovative research happening on campus, our numerous community partnerships and the cutting-edge educational facilities that house our programs. We are always extending invitations for campus tours to our elected officials and we are looking forward to hosting many more individuals in the coming months. If you have ideas for tours, please let us know.

Please Contact the University Relations staff with any questions and/or comments: universityrelations@fau.edu

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