OUTREACH
Palm Beach County and Boca Raton in Tallahassee
On March 5-6, 2013, citizens, businesses and public officials from Palm Beach County (PBC) travelled to Tallahassee to take party in the annual PBC Day event. The event took place over two days and allowed the participants to meet with members of the PBC Legislative Delegation, House and Senate leadership, and the Governor’s office. Attendees discussed a number of issues, including education, insurance and election reform, and the Florida Retirement System.

On March 6-8, 2013, the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce took part in the annual Florida Chamber of Commerce Tallahassee Fly-in. The event brought leaders from the Boca Raton Chamber, including BOT Chair Anthony Barbar, together with Chamber leaders from around the state. The Boca attendees met with members of the local legislative delegation and heard presentations from a number of legislators, including Senate President Don Gaetz.

Palm Beach County Business Development Board’s Familiarization Tour
This week, Vice President for Research, Dr. Barry Rosson, took part in a PBC Business Development Board (BDB) FAM Tour (Familiarization Tour). Periodically, the BDB invites corporate site selectors from around the country to visit PBC and discover all of the exciting things happening in our region. These tours bring together business leaders, local county and municipal officials, and educational leaders from across the K-20 spectrum to showcase what our county can offer a company interested in relocating. FAU plays an important role in these events, as we are seen not only as a potential educational institution, but also as a vital partner in workforce development and training.

COMMITTEE WEEK ROUNDUP
The 2013 Legislative Session Begins
Tuesday, March 5, 2013, marked the beginning of the 2013 Legislative Session. The Session will last 60 days and conclude on Friday, May 3, 2013.

Budget and Appropriations
On Thursday, March 7, 2013, Senate Appropriations Chairman Joe Negron indicated that the upper
chamber of the Legislature will release budget allocations, which are funding levels given to each piece of the state’s budget, next week. However, despite the early progress of budget talks in the Senate, there are several factors that could impact budgetary outcomes. The effects of the federal sequestration, the Legislature’s decision regarding the expansion of Medicaid eligibility, and the Governor’s proposal granting $2,500 teacher raises and merit bonuses for state workers, could all have significant impacts on Florida’s budget.

On Wednesday, March 6, 2013, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education heard a brief presentation from the Committee’s Staff Director about the Start Up Education Budget Calculations for FY2013-14. The Committee’s calculations and Start Up Budget can be viewed in the meeting packet below.

Education Accountability – Data Warehouse
On Wednesday, March, 6, 2013, the Senate Education Committee considered several pieces of legislation. Among the bills considered, were Sen. Legg’s CAPE Act (SB 1076 – discussed in previous Legislative Updates) and Sen. Galvano’s Education Accountability measure. Both pieces of legislation passed favorably out of committee. However, Sen. Galvano’s bill drew a number of questions from fellow Senators and members of the public.

The measure would streamline the process for researchers and other organizations to gain access and use information from the Department of Education’s (DOE) “data warehouse,” which collects data from public schools, state colleges and universities. The bill would require the DOE to create a web-based point for authorized researchers to gather aggregated data as well as a “research engine,” allowing access to “student level” data. The measure has drawn criticism from advocacy groups who have expressed concerns about student privacy. Questions have been raised about the level of personal information available to researchers, who can gain access to the information, whether or not the information can be sold, who will bear liability if the information is misused, as well as many others. Sen. Galvano has stated that he is working with stakeholders to ensure the legislation addresses these problems.

Higher Education and Resident Status for Tuition Purposes
On Wednesday March 6, 2013, the Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee considered two committee bills. The first, was the Committee’s comprehensive higher education bill (PCB HEWS 13-01), which proposes a number of changes to the State College and State University Systems. The second, was the Committee’s Resident Status for Tuition
Purposes bill (PCB HEWS 13-02), which combined several individual bills that dealt with residency issues ranging from military families to undocumented immigrants. Both proposed pieces of legislation passed favorably out of committee.

Meeting Packet

FEDERAL ISSUES
Congresswoman Lois Frankel
On Friday, March 8, 2013, University Relations staff met with Congresswoman Lois Frankel in her District Office. The Congresswoman was given a broad overview of the University’s goals and initiatives. The meeting also included a discussion about sequestration and its potential impacts on research. University Relations hopes to work with Congresswoman Frankel and the other members of the FAU Federal Delegation to maximize the University’s opportunities in Washington, DC.

The Federal Budget – Continuing Resolution
The House of Representative has approved a six-month stopgap spending bill for FY13 to keep the government operating after March 27. The measure sets an annual spending level of $982 billion for discretionary accounts. The entire bill extends FY12 funding levels minus the sequestration cuts (5% for nondefense and 7.8% for defense) and then also has an additional slight across-the-board cut of 0.098 percent. The bill does not stop the effect of sequestration but if passed by the Senate it would eliminate the threat of a government shutdown, which all sides now say they want to avoid.

The bill contains complete, negotiated bills for Defense, Military Construction and the VA, and then extends funding for the remaining federal agencies for the rest of FY13. Bipartisan efforts are underway in the Senate to amend the House bill next week and add negotiated, complete bills for several domestic agencies and science agencies in particular. Such a move would mean the whole package would return to the House for another vote.

One of the general provisions in the bill would transfer funding from the Education Department’s Safe Schools and Citizenship Education initiative to the Project School Emergency Response to Violence program. The program is available to colleges, universities and schools to help them recover in the aftermath of a violent or traumatic event. The program has not been funded since 2008, but in the aftermath of the Connecticut school shootings support has been building for such federal support.