

CS/CS/HB 745 — Tuition Differential, Professional Program Tuition, and Ad Valorem Taxation for Educational Institutions

by Policy and Budget Council; Schools and Learning Council; and Rep. Precourt and others
(CS/SB 1768 by Higher Education Appropriations Committee and Senator Lynn)

The bill revises the eligibility criteria for state universities authorized by the Board of Governors to establish an undergraduate tuition differential, not to exceed 30 percent of tuition, to require only that the institution have research and development expenditures of at least \$100 million per year, as reported by the National Science Foundation. Accordingly, these universities would no longer have to meet the 2005 Carnegie Classification as a research university with very high research activity to qualify for the tuition differential.

The bill allows the Board of Governors or their designee to increase the combination of tuition and out-of-state fee for professional programs by a maximum of 15 percent a year, rather than the 10 percent currently in effect.

The bill also clarifies that property owned by educational institutions used exclusively for educational purposes are totally exempt from ad valorem taxation. Mixed use facilities owned by educational institutions, which are predominately used for educational purposes, are to be taxed for ad valorem purposes on a proportionate use basis.

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

Vote: Senate 38-2; House 117-0

CS/HB 7105 — Postsecondary Distance Learning

by Policy and Budget Council; Schools and Learning Council; and Rep. Pickens
(CS/CS/SB 1762 by Higher Education Committee; Higher Education Appropriations Committee; and Senator Lynn)

The bill creates the Florida Distance Learning Task Force to study and make recommendations on key distance learning policy issues that will help to increase access to community college and university undergraduate distance learning resources.

The task force is comprised of four representatives from the State University System, four representatives from the Community College System, and the executive director of the Florida Distance Learning Consortium. The task force is charged with submitting a detailed report by March 1, 2009, with recommendations on several key distance learning issues to include:

- Management and promotion of the Distance Learning Catalog.

- Policies that address ways to increase access and cost-effectiveness in developing and delivering distance learning courses.
- A plan for streamlining and expediting the registration process for students enrolling in courses listed in the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog.
- The future role of the Florida Distance Learning Consortium.

The task force expires July 1, 2009.

The bill also establishes the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog as a central point of access to distance learning courses, degree programs, and resources offered by the community colleges and state universities.

The bill establishes a per credit hour distance learning course fee, which may be assessed by the community colleges and state universities for distance learning courses listed in the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog. The distance learning course fee may not exceed the additional costs of the services attributable to the development and delivery of distance learning courses. If a distance learning course fee is assessed, institutions may not assess duplicative fees to cover the additional costs. The community colleges must annually report to the Division of Community Colleges the total amount of revenue generated by the distance learning course fee for the prior academic year and how the revenue was expended.

The bill also requires that institutions must prominently display a link to the Florida Higher Education Distance Learning Catalog on their web site.

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

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 111-0

CS/SB 1774 — Postsecondary Student Fees

by Higher Education Appropriations Committee and Senator Lynn

The bill amends the current workforce and community college technology fees to be consistent with the state university technology fee authorized to take effect in the fall semester of FY 2009-2010. The changes to the workforce and community college fees will also take effect in FY 2009-2010.

The bill makes technical changes to workforce and community college student fees to clarify that the out-of-state fee for workforce education programs is an amount three times the standard tuition per contact hour. The bill also adds a grandfather provision to address changes made during the 2007C Special Session that could impact a college's activity and service fee.

The bill amends current statutory provisions relating to student financial aid fees:

- To increase from \$250,000 to \$500,000 the threshold under which a community college qualifies to assess a 2 percent surcharge on the student financial aid fee; and
- To increase from \$300,000 to \$600,000 the amount of financial aid fee revenue that may be used for merit, athletic, public service, or other types of non-need based financial aid.

The bill places in statute a requirement for the University of Miami to maintain its current level of services to indigent and charity care patients in order for the university to receive its annual appropriation for the first accredited medical school.

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

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 116-3

