

SPC St. Petersburg College

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

General Session Highlights

- ▶ The 2024 Florida Legislature adjourned sine die on Friday, March 8, 2024. The legislature approved the General Appropriations Act and an overall budget of \$117.46 billion. A total of 1,957 bills were filed this Session, with only 325 bills being passed by both chambers (after 43 floor sessions) and sent to the Governor.
- ▶ Of significance, the Florida College System (FCS) has been authorized to participate in the State of Florida's Group Health Insurance Program, beginning in the 2025 Plan Year. More details will follow as the implementation procedures are clarified and communicated to the College.
- ▶ A challenge in funding results this year for the FCS was the fact that no new money was appropriated to the FCS Program Fund to be distributed to the colleges through the improved funding formula as adopted and implemented last year, despite \$80 million being included in the State Board of Education's Legislative Budget Request and in the Governor's Proposed Budget for increased costs associated with participation in the State Group Insurance Program for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Supporting this recommended increase in operating funds was one of the key priorities of the Florida College System Council of Presidents. St. Petersburg College is also grateful to have received the inclusion of an \$1 million in funds in the final legislatively approved budget for a Manufacturing Lab and another \$1 million in funds for Phase II of the Palladium Theater Renovations.

General Appropriations Act (GAA) 2024-25

- ▶ The Legislature has three methods to reflect funding decisions made in the General Appropriations Act process.
 - ▶ "Proviso" is language in the General Appropriations Act attached to a specific appropriation that directs or authorizes how the funds can be expended.
 - ▶ An "implementing bill" is a substantive bill that provides instructions to enact specific provisions for a General Appropriations Act appropriation or proviso by changing the law (Florida Statutes) temporarily for one year. This is necessary because the courts have ruled the General Appropriations Act cannot contradict current law; however, there may be a need to suspend some provision of law.
 - ▶ A "conforming bill" is also a substantive bill that may "travel" with the General Appropriations Act. It differs from the implementing bill in that it makes permanent changes to Florida Statutes.

- ▶ In summary, proviso language and implementing bills are law for only one year and then they expire, while a conforming bill makes a permanent change in Florida law. While the Governor may veto the entire appropriations act or exercise his veto by “line item,” he does not have “line item” veto in a conforming or implementing bill but must act on the entire bill. Bills that are passed by the Legislature are sent to the Governor for further action. The Governor may sign, veto, or allow a bill to become law without his signature. After the Legislature Session is adjourned, the Governor has fifteen (15) consecutive days from the date he receives a bill to act on that bill. Leadership of the Legislature staggers sending bills to the Governor in order to provide time to carefully review the bills.

- ▶ When a bill is passed and sent to the Governor while the Legislature is still in session, the timeline is different; the Governor must act within seven (7) days from the time his office receives the bill.

- ▶ The following are the 2024-2025 appropriations bills:
 - ▶ [Chapter 2024-231 – House Bill No. 5001 General Appropriations Act](#)
 - ▶ [Conference Report on HB 5003 - Implementing the 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act](#)

St. Petersburg College Funding 2024-2025

Funding Category	Selected System Funding Matters	St. Petersburg College Funding 24-25
Program Fund – General Revenue & Lottery (Combined)	Funding Formula Model – No Additional Dollars	\$93,333,325
2+2 Program Incentive	\$17 million allocated to FCS	\$986,564
Workforce Incentive	\$13 million allocated to FCS	\$676,122
Nursing PIPELINE Program	\$40 million allocated to FCS	\$2,139,506
Manufacturing Lab (PECO Funding)		\$1,000,000
Palladium Theater Renovations Phase II		\$1,000,000
Additional Funding Opportunities	Available to State Universities, Technical Colleges and FCS Institutions	
Industry Certification	\$20 million allocated to FCS	TBD
Nursing LINE Program	\$19 million allocated to the FCS	TBD

How to Find the Final Version of a Bill

The simplest way to see the final version of a bill is to go to www.flsenate.gov and enter the bill number in the space provided on the top of the homepage or go to www.flhouse.gov and click on the top tab “Bills.” Senate bills are always even numbers (SB 00), and House bills are always odd numbers (HB 11). On the House site, note that you may choose either chamber or choose “both.” When you enter the bill number, the history of the bill will appear. For bills that have passed, go to the section on “Bill Text” and choose the entry followed by “ER,” which is the most recent, enrolled version of the bill. An enrolled bill is the one being sent to the Governor. For bills that have not passed, go to the section on “Bill Text” and choose the entry with the latest date, which is the final version of the bill before it failed. Staff analyses for bills are also found on the bill sites.

GENERAL BILLS OF NOTE THAT PASSED

CS/HB 151 – Retirement (Chapter No. 2024-92)

- ▶ The bill relating to the Florida Retirement System establishes the contribution rates paid by employers that participate in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) beginning July 1, 2024. These rates are intended to fund the full normal cost and the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the FRS and the impact of policy changes included in the amendment.
- ▶ The bill authorizes an FRS retiree to be reemployed with an employer participating in the FRS and receive both compensation and retirement benefits, after meeting the definition of termination. This effectively eliminates the “suspension of benefits” period typically applied during months 7 through 12 after the date of termination. (*Note: Existing law continues to provide that a retiree may not be reemployed with an employer participating in the Florida Retirement System until such person has been retired for 6 calendar months.*)
- ▶ Effective Date: July 1, 2024

SB 818 – Military Leave (Chapter No. 2024-19)

- ▶ Entitles state, county, municipality, or political subdivision officials and employees to full pay for the first 30 days of military leave for active federal service exceeding 90 consecutive days.
- ▶ Allows the employing authority to supplement military pay after the first 30 days to match the salary level at the time of deployment.
- ▶ Mandates the continuation of health insurance and other benefits as required by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.
- ▶ Effective Dates: July 1, 2024

CS/CS/HB 917 – Career and Technical Education (*Chapter No. 2024-125*)

- ▶ Amends multiple statutes to revise career and technical education, licensure qualifications, and minor employment exemptions in Florida, and repeals the Florida Talent Development Council.
- ▶ Facilitates coordination and expansion of apprenticeship and work-based learning programs.
- ▶ Requires publication of a statewide asset map of career and technical education by March 1, 2025, detailing secondary education course offerings funding, and alignment with industry demand.
- ▶ Mandates an annual report on efforts to meet health care workforce needs, including extensive data collection on nursing programs.
- ▶ Effective Date: July 1, 2024

CS/CS/HB 1285 – Education (*Chapter No. 2024-101*)

- ▶ Streamlines and amends various components of Florida’s education system from K-12 through postsecondary levels, with focuses on charter schools, virtual education, military family support, disciplinary programs, employment for students, instructional materials, among other areas.
- ▶ Prohibits public postsecondary institutions from restricting student employment, with exceptions for students employed by an organization/agency affiliated or associated with foreign countries of concern.
- ▶ Authorizes associates in arts specialized transfer degrees, detailing the approval process and degree requirements. This new degree authority will remove a significant obstacle impacting FCS students who desire to pursue a baccalaureate degree at a State University.
- ▶ Repeals the FCS institution employment equity accountability program.
- ▶ Allows for proof of a homestead exemption in Florida to serve as the single, conclusive piece of evidence to prove residency for tuition purposes.
- ▶ Clarifies that College and State University board of trustee members are subject to the ethics requirements of s. 112.313, F.S. with regard to business dealings with their respective institutions and other entities (e.g., direct support organizations) under their purview.
- ▶ Effective Date: July 1, 2024

CS/HB 1291 – Educator Preparation Programs (*Chapter No. 2024-141*)

- ▶ The bill prohibits educator and school leader preparation programs from including curriculum that distorts historical events or teaches identity politics and mandates these programs to offer opportunities for critical thinking and competence demonstration.
- ▶ Prohibits teacher preparation courses from distorting significant historical events and from teaching curriculum based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the U.S. institutions.
- ▶ Requires teacher preparation courses to provide opportunities for candidates to think critically, achieve mastery of academic content, learn instructional strategies, and demonstrate competence.
- ▶ Extends these prohibitions and requirements to postsecondary educator preparation institutes, professional learning certification programs, and school leader preparation programs.
- ▶ Effective Date: July 1, 2024

CS/SB 1746 – Public Employees (*Chapter No. 2024-23*)

- ▶ Revises public employee organization regulations, including dues collection and registration requirements.
- ▶ Requires public employees desiring to be in an employee organization to submit a signed form to the bargaining agent, including specific information about dues and the rights of employees regarding union membership.
- ▶ Permits the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) to investigate employee organization applications for registration renewal and mandates denial under specific inaccuracies.
- ▶ Requires employee organizations with less than 60% of unit employee who have submitted membership authorization forms without subsequent revocation and paid dues to the organization during its last registration period to petition for recertification and allows public employers or employees to challenge the accuracy of the organization’s renewal application.
- ▶ Effective Date: Upon Becoming Law (March 22, 2024)

CS/SB 7032 – Education (*Chapter No. 2024-161*)

- ▶ Establishes the Graduation Alternative To Traditional Education (GATE) Program to provide alternative pathways for students who have withdrawn from high school before graduation.
- ▶ Requires institutions to waive 100% of registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees for GATE Program students.
- ▶ Limits eligibility to students aged 16 to 21 who have not earned a high school diploma or

equivalency and are state residents.

- ▶ Establishes the GATE Scholarship, Startup Grant, and Program Performance Fund to support institutions and reward successful student outcomes.
- ▶ Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 5101 – **Education** (*Chapter 2024-230*)

- ▶ **Section 1** of this conforming bill amends s. 110.123, F.S., to revise definitions to include the FCS institutions in the State Group Health Insurance (SGHI) Program. The initial enrollment period is required to begin as soon as practicable with coverage beginning in the 2025 plan year by July 31, 2025. FCS institutions are required to participate for at least three (3) plan years.
- ▶ Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Prepared by the Office of the General Counsel and St. Petersburg College, with appreciation of the Florida Department of Education and Florida College System Institutional Lobbyists.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Office of the General Counsel at generalcounsel@spcollege.edu.

The online version of The Session Report may be found by clicking the following link: [Legislative Updates](#)