

Dear Friend of USF,

Welcome to the "USF Government Relations Newsletter," our newest information piece produced by the Office of Government Relations for the USF System. Our goal is to keep you apprised of the progress on major focuses of advocacy, such as the New Florida Initiative addressed in this issue, along with brief updates on bills and other legislative issues affecting the USF System. While the Florida Legislature is in session, we will send bi-weekly updates, with periodic updates throughout the year.

Mark Walsh, Assistant Vice President & Director of Government Relations for the USF System, will provide updates during the legislative session and will let you know when there is a specific call-to-action. Please contact us at [GovRelations@usf.edu](mailto:GovRelations@usf.edu) with any questions or comments.

Thanks for all you do for USF;



**Joel Momberg**  
CEO of the University of South Florida Foundation  
and Senior Vice President of University Advancement



## Advocacy Focus: New Florida Initiative

The major focus of advocacy during the 2011 Legislative Session will be centered around the *New Florida Initiative*. This is a multi-year effort, under the direction of the Board of Governors and Chancellor Frank T. Brogan, to position the 11 state universities as engines for major job growth and economic development for the state. The effort will reinforce and build upon the unique aspects and strengths demonstrated by each of the member institutions of the USF System (USF and USF Health, USF St. Petersburg, USF Sarasota-Manatee and USF Polytechnic). This endeavor will ensure that Florida's knowledge and innovation economy is sustained by high-technology, high-wage jobs through increased degree production, an increased focus on the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (or "STEM") and other important economic drivers. The *New Florida Initiative* is the State University System's collaborative effort--alongside partners in business and government--to deliver the economy, talent and innovations that Florida must have to be globally competitive in the 21st Century.

The first phase of New Florida funding came in the form of \$12 million in competitive grant funding appropriated by the Legislature for the 2010-11 fiscal year. The University of South Florida System was remarkably successful in securing these grants by winning 12 awards totaling nearly \$2 million. The awards will help USF attract and retain world-class faculty in disciplines such as Engineering, Marine Sciences, Health Services and Geophysics. They will also help USF to partner with other Florida universities to create clusters of research in fields such as Materials Engineering, Pharmaceuticals, and Information Technology. Finally, the awards will help USF and its partners commercialize innovative new products that will create jobs in the fields of Women's Health, Healthy Weight Loss and Assistance Devices for Individuals with Disabilities.

For 2011-12, the State University System is requesting \$150 million in new investment in the New Florida Initiative to help recharge and transform Florida's economy. Governor Scott's 7-7-7 *Plan for Florida's Future* specifically calls for a renewed "investment in university research, laboratories, business incubators, and technology transfer." It is imperative that this investment begin this year.

Beyond the new operational funding requested, another important aspect of the *New Florida Initiative* that can immediately help stimulate thousands of private-sector jobs is the continued investment in building and updating state university facilities. These highest-priority facilities and repairs are desperately needed to provide students with the best education possible, and faculty with the research space they need. This immediately creates private-sector construction, design, sales and manufacturing jobs that our state critically needs at this time.

On February 17th, the Board of Governors (BOG) released an updated list of recommendations for state university facilities to be constructed or repaired using PECO (Public Education Capital Outlay) trust fund monies. The BOG is recommending that the USF System receive nearly \$35 million in PECO construction funding for the 2011-12 fiscal year. This represents approximately 32% of the full state university system recommendation and more than three-times the amount of the next highest university.

The \$35 million recommended by the BOG would help the USF System to complete our two highest-priority PECO projects as soon as possible -- the Interdisciplinary Science Teaching & Research Facility in Tampa and the USF Polytechnic new campus along I-4. Both projects will be job-creators in the short-term and job-transformers for Florida in the long-term. The BOG's request also includes \$4.6 million in critical infrastructure funding for USF, USF St. Petersburg and USF Sarasota-Manatee.

Please help the USF System by conveying your support for the *New Florida Initiative* to your elected officials, business and community interest groups and other influential decision-makers in Florida.

To read more about the New Florida Initiative that was launched in 2010, visit: [http://www.flbog.edu/new\\_florida/](http://www.flbog.edu/new_florida/).

### FROM MARK WALSH

**Assistant Vice President & Director of Government Relations for the USF System**

Thank you for your interest in state legislative activity that impacts the University of South Florida System. On the eve of the 2011 Session of the Florida Legislature (March 8 - May 6), the conversations in the Capitol are dominated by yet another difficult budget year ahead of us, with most recent estimates projecting a deficit of approximately \$4 Billion for fiscal year 2011-12. Despite the still lagging Florida and national economies, we will continue working hard with our elected officials, other universities, business groups, students, faculty, alumni and other supporters to convey our message that investments in public higher education opportunities for Floridians, as well as increased support for university Research & Development, will put our state back to work and best position Florida to be an international leader in the 21st Century global marketplace. Your support and involvement can help make a difference.

## BILLS IN BRIEF

(SB = Senate Bill; HB = House Bill)

### SB 632 BY SENATOR OELRICH (R-GAINESVILLE) RE UNIVERSITY CONCURRENCY TRUST FUND

**Summary:** This bill provides a recurring funding source for the state's University Concurrency Trust Fund. The trust fund provides funding to state universities to pay their host communities for the impact of any construction on campus which necessitates offsite improvements. The trust fund's balance has depleted over time and this bill would designate a recurring source of existing state revenue into the trust fund to replenish it. Without the ability to pay for these impacts, construction on state universities' campuses could be negatively affected. The passage of this bill is a high priority for USF and the full state university system.

**Latest Action:** Referred to Senate committees for consideration. Awaiting a bill hearing.

### SB 500 BY SENATOR OELRICH (R-GAINESVILLE) RE GLOBAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION/LANGUAGES

**Summary:** This bill creates the "Student Global Economic Education Act." The act would provide that a state university student who passes a course in Mandarin or Portuguese with a grade of "B" or higher may continue to enroll in additional courses in that same language without being required to pay any tuition and fees for those additional Mandarin or Portuguese courses.

**Latest Action:** Referred to Senate committees for consideration. Awaiting a bill hearing.

### SB 826 BY SENATOR FASANO (R-NEW PORT RICHEY) AND HB 683 BY REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA (D-MIAMI BEACH) RE RESIDENCY STATUS FOR VETERAN STUDENTS

**Summary:** These bills provide that any veteran of the Armed Services of the United States (including its reserves) who attends a public college, university, or institution of higher learning in Florida shall be automatically classified as a state resident for purposes of his/her tuition pricing.

**Latest Action:** Referred to House and Senate committees for consideration. Awaiting bill hearings.

### SB 234 BY SENATOR EVERS (R-BAKER) AND HB 517 BY REPRESENTATIVE DORWORTH (R-LAKE MARY) RE FIREARMS

**Summary:** These bills allow any person who is issued a concealed weapons or concealed firearms permit to carry the weapon or firearm in open sight. These bills would also delete the section of current law that provides that a concealed weapons or firearms permit-holder is not authorized to carry the weapon or firearm into a state university, Florida College or career center facility. These proposed statutory revisions would have the effect of allowing any permit-holder to carry a firearm or weapon openly on campuses of state universities, Florida Colleges and career centers statewide.

**Latest Action:** Senate Bill -- On February 22nd, the Senate Criminal Justice Committee temporarily postponed action on the bill until a future committee meeting. House Bill -- Referred to House committees for consideration. Awaiting a bill hearing.

Locate contact information for your local Florida State Senator and Representative using your home address at:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/Find>