The 2014 Legislative Session has come to a close and it was perhaps the most successful at the State Capitol for any university in the state of Florida. The Florida Legislature has passed all of the USF System’s five legislative priorities for 2014 and more than 60 initiatives that will benefit the Tampa Bay region and the state of Florida. Here are a handful of highlights:

**Priorities All Pass**

On May 2, 2014 the Florida Legislative Session came to a close with a tremendously successful session for the USF System. Of the five legislative priorities the USF System negotiated with Florida’s students, faculty, and advocates and cooperated with the State’s over 200 state representatives, four objectives were achieved in the Florida Legislature, and one additional priority was partially achieved. All five priorities were passed or funded by the Florida Legislature.

The Florida Legislature recognized the Florida Board of Governors’ model and we stand to gain a substantial amount of new funding in recognition for the USF System’s high rankings in the nation and for the exceptional academic performance and career success for our graduates. The Florida Legislature passed S.B. 1501, which was sponsored by the Senate President, in February of this year, which codified the model and will be presented to Governor Scott to sign into law.

Priorities were passed or funded by the Florida Legislature.

1. Establish and invest in the Tampa Bay Heart Institute facility.

   **As the passage of HB 7015 and the subsequent signing of the bill by Governor Scott, the Florida Legislature created the Tampa Bay Heart Institute. The purpose of the institute is to improve diagnosis and treatment of heart diseases and disorders by creating a new state-of-the-art Morsani College of Medicine to replace the existing, outdated facility constructed in the early 1970’s.**

   $5 million was allocated to USF Health to begin the construction of the Tampa Bay Heart Institute. Permanent language was placed into Florida Statute to establish the Tampa Bay Heart Institute.

2. Provide funding toward completing construction of the Florida Center for Cybersecurity.

   **This work began to push for on USF Day at the Capitol in February of this year, and was a tremendously successful one for the entire USF System. Of the approximately 40 bills that were passed or funded by the Florida Legislature, we have a recoup of our Top 5 Legislative Priorities for 2014 and how each was addressed.**

   Due to our tremendous advocates in the Florida Legislature, we were able to accomplish all of our Top 5 Priorities and achieve numerous other victories in our favor. Unfortunately, Governor Scott will not have the opportunity to sign all the bills before the end of the year, and as such, several bills are pending consideration by Governor Scott. The USF System is grateful to all of our advocates in the Florida Legislature who have worked with us to support the USF System’s legislative priorities and thank them for their support for the USF System. We look forward to working with the Governor on all of those bills that have not been signed or acted upon as soon as possible.

   Governor Scott:

   Scott Welch
   Executive Director of University Partnerships and Advocacy
   The Florida System for Government Relations
   Mark Walsh
   Assistant Vice President for Government Relations

   Go Bulls!

   Mark Walsh
   Assistant Vice President for Government Relations
   Executive Director of University Partnerships and Advocacy
   The Florida System for Government Relations

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