

Dear Friend of USF,

The negotiation process over next year's state budget is winding down and funding for higher education remains one of the few outstanding issues left to resolve. As it stands today, the Senate is proposing to spend more than \$100 million more on state universities than the House is proposing.

Full restoration of funding for the State University system is critical to the economic recovery of Florida. The state cannot afford another year of cuts to its universities' budgets. So, earlier this week we called upon our alumni and supporters to contact legislators on behalf of full funding for the USF System's institutions and campuses. Their advocacy has made a tremendous difference for the USF System during this critical juncture in the budget-writing process.

As a citizen of Florida, you are always permitted to contact your legislators to express your opinions as a private citizen on matters under consideration by the Florida Legislature. However, we must remind you that state law prohibits employees from engaging in these types of activities during work hours or using state resources, such as a state-owned computer or state email, Internet or phone service. Please be sure to observe this state prohibition in any activities you wish to undertake to support funding for the USF System.

Thank you for your support. GO BULLS!

Mark Walsh

Assistant VP & Director of Government Relations for the USF System



LEGISLATIVE ACTION UPDATE: Construction Underway on USF St. Petersburg Student Center

Pictured above is an architectural rendering of what the new USFSP Multipurpose Student Center will look like once completed.

Earlier this month, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP) hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on campus for its new Multipurpose Student Center. Construction is now underway on the \$20 million project that is scheduled to open in time for the fall 2012 semester. The 81,000 square-foot facility will include dining services, a ballroom, meeting spaces and a six-story residence hall that will add nearly 200 new student residents to downtown St. Petersburg. The building will also add a source of revenue through rentals for community organizations, businesses and the public.

"The Multipurpose Student Center will be transformational for USF St. Petersburg," said Debbie Sembler, a member of the USF Board of Trustees and Chair of the USFSP Campus Board. "This building was made possible by a tremendous effort throughout the university, especially among the student leaders who worked tirelessly on behalf of their peers."

Part of the funding for the facility was the result of student advocacy efforts. During the 2010 Legislative Session, the USF System worked alongside USFSP's Student Government to seek authority to construct the center and the revenue to support its use through a special increase in USFSP student fees. This increased fee revenue—authorized by the passage of House Bill 5201 (2010)—will help support the operations of the center and the students who utilize it. With the students' support, a portion of their increased activity and services fee will also be allocated toward meeting the requirement for LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED certification embodies the gold standard in energy efficiency for new buildings. Though LEED-certified buildings often may cost more to construct, they save money in energy costs over the lifespan of the building.

The student center will be the latest addition to the corridor known as Harborwalk at USFSP. Recent construction along the Harborwalk includes the LEED-certified Science and Technology Building, which opened in January 2010, and the Debbie and Brent Sembler Family Fountain, which was dedicated in October 2009.

The student center's residence hall will be the second residential facility for USF St. Petersburg. The first hall, Residence Hall One, opened in 2006 and accommodates 351 residents in a seven-story apartment-style building. Concurrent with the student center construction, the interior renovation of the Campus Activities Center will add health services to USF St. Petersburg and expand facilities for student organizations and services. The traditional dining services planned for the student center will serve the residential student population, commuters, employees and guests while contributing to the economic development of downtown St. Petersburg.

Acquiring the funding necessary to construct the USFSP Multipurpose Student Center was accomplished through the sharing of resources across the USF System of campuses and institutions. It stands as yet another great example of the efficiencies and strengths that can be achieved when multiple institutions within the USF System work together to meet our communities' needs. The Board of Governors of the State University System gave final approval to the plan for financing the construction of the Student Center during a special meeting in December 2010 and construction on the newest facility in the USF System is now underway.

For more information on the USFSP Multipurpose Student Center and other construction and renovation updates from USF St. Petersburg, visit:

<http://stpete.usf.edu/aboutusf/construction.htm>

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usfalumni.org/advocate

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

flsenate.gov/Senators/Find

BUDGET CONFORMING BILLS

(SB = Senate Bill; HB = House Bill)

SB 2150 BY THE SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE RE: POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Summary: SB 2150 is the Senate's postsecondary education budget conforming bill. The bill makes proposed changes to Florida Laws in order to enact the budget decisions made in the Senate's proposed state budget for fiscal year 2011-2012. The proposed changes contained in the bill include: 1) temporarily suspending the state's matching gift programs for private donations to state universities and community colleges; 2) creating additional bonding capacity for the state to construct school facilities through the PECO program; 3) increasing the surcharge the state charges on top of tuition for students who take certain "excess hours" beyond the number of hours required to complete a degree program; 4) allowing state universities to implement a program in which a cohort of students would attend the university only in spring and summer terms; and 5) creating a new scholarship program for students with financial need who are majoring in certain Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) degree programs.

Latest Action: Passed by the full Senate on April 7th. The bill will be included in the budget conference negotiation process between the two chambers once the process formally begins.

LINK TO SB 2150: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/issues/alert/?alertid=41255686>

HB 5201 BY THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE RE: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Summary: HB 5201 is the House's postsecondary education budget conforming bill. The bill makes proposed changes to Florida Laws in order to enact the budget decisions made in the House's proposed state budget for fiscal year 2011-2012. The proposed changes contained in the bill include: 1) allowing state university boards of trustees the flexibility to use certain fee revenues to offset budget reductions in the next fiscal year; 2) instituting a cap on the amount of state funds that may be used to pay for certain state university and Florida College System administrators' salaries; 3) increasing the surcharge the state charges on top of tuition for students who take certain "excess hours" beyond the number of hours required to complete a degree program; and 4) significantly increasing the minimum standards required for students to meet to become eligible to receive a Bright Futures scholarship award.

Latest Action: Passed by the full House of Representatives on April 7th. The bill will be included in the budget conference negotiation process between the two chambers once the process formally begins.

LINK TO HB 5201: <http://capwiz.com/usfalumni/issues/alert/?alertid=41255686>

To send feedback email:
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