

VALENCIA COLLEGE

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

March 29, 2024

General Session Highlights

- ▶ The 2024 Florida Legislature adjourned sine die on Friday afternoon, 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.
- ▶ Notably, Florida College System (FCS) institutions have been authorized (pending approval of the Governor) 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 Colleges. Also, the Legislature has authorized FCS institutions to offer specialized transfer Associate in Arts degrees, which will promote affordability and reduce barriers that exist for our students in their pursuit of baccalaureate degrees, especially in STEM fields.
- ▶ 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 \$50 million being included in the State Board of Education's Legislative Budget Request and in the Governor's Proposed Budget. Supporting this recommended increase in operating funds was one of the key priorities of the Florida College System Council of Presidents. The legislature did, however, appropriate \$80 million towards the inclusion of the colleges in the State Group Insurance Program, at the request of the Florida College System Council of Presidents. Valencia College is also grateful to have received the inclusion of an additional \$3 million in recurring operating funds in the final legislatively approved budget.

General Appropriations Act (GAA) 2024-25 (*Pending Approval of Governor*)

Background

- ▶ The Legislature has three methods to reflect funding decisions made in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) 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 GAA appropriation or proviso by changing the law (Florida Statutes) temporarily for one year. This is necessary because the courts have ruled the GAA 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 GAA. It differs from the implementing bill in that it makes permanent changes to Florida Statutes.

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- ▶ 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, implementing, or general 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. Because the Legislature has now adjourned the 2024 Session, the Governor has fifteen consecutive days from the date he receives a bill to act on that bill. Leadership of the Legislature usually staggers sending bills to the Governor in order to provide time to review the bills.

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

- ▶ Following are the 2024-2025 appropriations bills (*Pending Approval by Governor*):
 - [Conference Report on HB 5001 – 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act](#)
 - [Conference Report on HB 5003 - Implementing the 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act](#)

Valencia College Funding – 2024-2025

Funding Category	Selected System Funding Matters	Valencia Funding 24-25
Program Fund– General Revenue & Lottery (Combined)	Funding Formula Model – No Additional Dollars	\$125,831,247
2+2 Program Incentive	\$17 million allocated to the FCS	\$2,734,637
Workforce Incentive	\$13 million allocated to the FCS	\$1,781,545
Nursing PIPELINE program	\$40 million allocated to the FCS	\$2,111,359
Lake Nona Building 2 (PECO Funding)		\$3,000,000
Operational Support (Recurring)		\$3,000,000 (included in Program Fund above)
TOTAL (Operations)		\$132,458,788 (Excluding Dual Enrollment and Industry Certifications)
Additional Funding Opportunities	Available to State Universities, Tech Colleges, and FCS Institutions	
Nursing LINE program	\$19,000,000 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

(All bills noted below are pending approval of the Governor, unless otherwise noted)

CS/SB 62 (Osgood) Resident Status for Tuition Purposes

- ▶ Ensures individuals do not lose their resident status for tuition purposes due to incarceration in a state or federal facility in Florida.
 - Redesignates current subsections (4) through (13) of section 1009.21, Florida Statutes, as subsections (5) through (14), respectively.
 - Adds a new subsection (4) stating an individual's incarceration in a state or federal correctional facility in Florida does not result in the loss of resident status for tuition purposes.
- ▶ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

CS/HB 151 (Busatta Cabrera) Retirement

- ▶ The Conference Committee Amendment for CS/HB 151, 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 amendment 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: 7/1/2024

SB 818 (Avila) Military Leave (Approved by Governor; 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 Date: 7/1/2024

CS/CS/HB 917 (Snyder) Career and Technical Education

- ▶ 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: 7/1/2024

CS/CS/HB 1285 (Canady) Education

- ▶ 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 associate in arts specialized transfer degrees, detailing the approval process and degree requirements. This new degree authority will remove a significant obstacle that confronts Florida College System students who aspire to pursue a baccalaureate degree at a State University.
- Note: Currently, many FCS students pursuing a degree in a STEM field have no way of completing the lower-division courses that are required for admission into upper-division programs before exhausting their financial aid eligibility at their FCS institution. The creation of Associate in Arts Specialized Transfer Degrees will allow FCS institutions to build SUS program prerequisites into the graduation requirements for these specialized Associate in Arts degrees and place FCS students on equal footing with native SUS students who are in STEM pathways with respect to federal financial aid eligibility.

CS/CS/HB 1285, cont.

- ▶ Repeals the Florida College System institution employment equity accountability program.
- ▶ Allows for a single, conclusive piece of evidence to prove residency for tuition purposes (proof of a homestead exemption in Florida).
- ▶ Clarifies that while serving, College and State University board 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: 7/1/2024

CS/HB 1291 (Snyder, Jacques) Educator Preparation Programs

- ▶ 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: 7/1/2024

CS/SB 1746 (Ingoglia) Public Employees *(Approved by Governor; 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.
- ▶ Empowers the Public Employees Relations Commission to investigate employee organization applications for registration renewal and mandates denial under specific inaccuracies.
- ▶ Requires employee organizations with less than 60% of unit employees, during its last registration period, who have submitted membership authorization forms without subsequent revocation and paid dues to the organization to petition for recertification and allows public employers or employees to challenge the accuracy of an organization's renewal application.
- ▶ Effective Date: Upon Becoming Law

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CS/SB 7032 (Education Postsecondary) Education

- ▶ The 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: 7/1/2024

HB 5101 (PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee) Education

- ▶ **Section 1** of this conforming bill amends s. 110.123, F.S., to revise definitions to include Florida College System (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 3 plan years.
- ▶ **Section 21** revises s. 1009.896, F.S., to expand the Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to include emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and firefighters, and specify eligibility criteria and authorized uses of funds. Accordingly, the amendment changes the name to the Florida First Responder Scholarship Program.
- ▶ Effective 7/1/2024



The online version (with updates as available) of The 2024 Session Report may be found at <http://valenciacollege.edu/generalcounsel>.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Bill Mallowney, Vice President for Policy and General Counsel, at bmallowney@valenciacollege.edu.