Dr. Atwater Appears Before House Education Committee
Dr. Ken Atwater and seven other Florida College System presidents participated in a 2-1/2 hour discussion with Chairman Bill Proctor and members of the House Education Committee earlier this month. They discussed the status of Florida’s community colleges, focused on the colleges’ dual missions of Associate degree completion and transfer to 4 year universities, targeted 4 year workforce-focused degrees, and preparation to enter the workforce through shorter term certificate and training programs. Dr. Atwater was able to point to the College’s many STEM-focused programs as meeting local employers’ staffing requirements. The entire session was a lively and frank discussion.

Another panel of six college presidents participated in a similar panel with the Education Committee the following week. In total, the committee received input from over half of the College System institution’s leaders.

State Budget
The House has completed work on its $69.2 billion budget for the Fiscal year 2012-13. That plan allocates $986.8 to the Florida College System, and allows for an 8% increase in tuition. With the tuition increase, this represents a 0.4% increase from the current budget year.

The Senate has lagged on its budget preparation as it dealt with other issues. A $70.8 billion proposal was rolled out late last week in subcommittees, and is under review by the Budget Committee this week. It is expected to be approved by the entire Senate the week of Feb 20. The Senate proposal allocates $1.044 billion in state funds to the FCS, and allows for a 3% increase in tuition. With the full 3% tuition increase, this represents an increase of 1.7% over the current fiscal year.

In contrast, Governor Scott’s budget proposal for the FCS is $1.044 billion in state funds with no increase in tuition. The Governor has repeatedly stated that he will not allow tuition to rise.

### Proposed Funding for HCC in FY 12-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>House (8% Tuition)</th>
<th>Senate Proposed (3% Tuition)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Funds</td>
<td>48,291,678</td>
<td>41,304,573</td>
<td>48,301,735</td>
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<tr>
<td>W/tuition</td>
<td>101,544,156</td>
<td>102,452,165</td>
<td>103,156,693</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Once the Senate budget is passed, conference committee work to reconcile differences between the House and Senate will begin, likely in about 10 days.

To view detailed spreadsheets on the Florida College System budget proposals, please visit the Community and Government Affairs Web page.

University of South Florida and Florida Polytechnic University
When the Senate budget proposal and related conforming bills were released, there were a couple of surprises for the University of South Florida. The Senate proposal would cut $79 million in state funding from USF — out of a total of $400 million in reductions to the university system statewide. Another $25 million would be held by the state pending USF’s cooperation in making USF’s Lakeland campus into "Florida Polytechnic University".
the subject of its own Senate budget conforming bill.

Factoring in the extra faculty, staff and students USF would have to absorb because of the split, and the money for USF's pharmacy school that would go away with the change, USF says they are looking at a cut of almost $104 million.

Tampa area Senators are stepping up to defend USF and ask that any reductions in its budget be in line with those of the other universities. Sen. J.D. Alexander, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, is not expected to budge on the either issue, but Rep. Will Weatherford, House Speaker-designate, is expected to come to USF’s defense in the budget conference committee process which will begin in about 10 days.

Breaking news today: Sen. Alexander has agreed to restore the $25 million that would have been held back contingent upon the Florida Polytechnic split.

Restrictions on University or Florida College System Employees from Serving in the Legislature
Sen. John Thrasher, Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, proposed SB 1560, which would restrict members of the Legislature from employment with state universities or Florida College System institutions and would require that a member of the Legislature surrender employment with a state university or a Florida College System institution before seeking reelection.

Several members of the current Legislature are employed as instructors or administrators at public colleges and universities in Florida and would have to choose between legislative service or their employment if this bill had passed. It was approved narrowly in the Ethics and Elections Subcommittee, but was defeated on a 6-6 tie vote in Sen. Thrasher’s own Rules Committee and is dead for this session.

President Obama’s Plan for Community Colleges
President Barak Obama unveiled his federal budget proposal earlier this week and announced the creation of an $8 billion "Community College to Career Fund" in a speech at Northern Virginia Community College.

The proposed new fund would train workers for unfilled jobs through apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and internships. It would also support industry efforts to develop skills consortia, standardize industry certifications, develop new training technologies, and offer grants to state and local governments that encourage companies to locate in the United States.

It seems unlikely that the president will get as much money as he's asking for. In 2009 he asked Congress to approve $12-billion for community colleges, but that amount was whittled down to $2-billion in the final bill.

Under the president's plan, states, industries, and colleges that were successful in placing workers in jobs would be eligible for additional "pay-for-performance" money.

The fund would also finance a six-week online training course on entrepreneurship for up to 500,000 new entrepreneurs and an intensive six-month entrepreneurship-training program for 100,000 small-business owners.

Volunteers Needed for Republican National Convention Tampa Bay Host Committee
The Republican National Convention will be held in Tampa the week of August 27, 2012. The Tampa Bay Host Committee is looking for more than 7500 volunteers to be the face of Tampa Bay for convention
delegates and visitors. Volunteers will be posted at airports, hotels and throughout downtown Tampa, and will fill a variety of functions. Host Committee volunteers are non-partisan and have no political mission or affiliation with any political party. The mission of the volunteer program is to represent Tampa Bay.

For more information, and to sign up as a volunteer, visit the Host Committee’s web page: http://2012tampa.com/get-involved/

Community and Government Relations Web Page
Please visit and bookmark this new web page, http://hccfl.edu/departments/government-affairs.aspx. It is an evolving one-stop source for info related to local, state and federal governments.

All issues of the HCC Legislative Report will be posted to this page. And links are provided to web sites for Florida’s Governor, Senate and House where much useful and interesting information is available about state government.

If you have questions about these or other legislative issues, please call or email Sally Everett, Director of Community and Government Relations, at 813-253-7560 or severett8@hccfl.edu. Please visit the Government Relations web page at: http://hccfl.edu/departments/government-affairs.aspx