Update from Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor
August 24, 2010

While the Deepwater Horizon oil well has been finally blocked – and a permanent solution is expected in the weeks to come – the System continues several critical contributions toward different aspects of the State’s overall response and recovery relative to the oil spill. Our ongoing efforts have been remarkable, and we have been asked to engage in two new ways.

Our current efforts:
• As you may know, within days of the oil spill, the State University System Oil Spill Academic Task Force was formed and has served as a catalyst and repository for vital discussions and cross-pollination of information. The task force has partnered with the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) to develop a proposal to BP for fast-track funding of academic research, which has lead to a verbal commitment from BP for $100 million to each affected Gulf state specifically for academic scientific research.

• After receiving the first $10 million on behalf of the System, the FIO immediately formed an impressive and diverse Research Advisory Panel – which includes state agency researchers – to solicit and review grants. It received more than 200 grant requests totaling more than $60 million, and recently selected $9 million in proposals to fund. It will meet again in mid-September to finalize the monetary amounts for each grant in a systematic way to 1) avoid any unnecessary duplication, 2) provide data to multiple teams for collaborative efforts, and 3) ensure the fullest maximization of the grant funds overall.

The System has been requested to participate in the massive State effort in two new areas:

• The Governor’s Gulf Oil Spill Economic Recovery Task Force is a cross-cutting group facilitating all efforts to examine business and state revenue loss due to the oil spill, as well as any later potential legal options. One of the current areas of focus is gathering economic loss data with the goal of collecting financial costs and revenue loss on a monthly basis.
The House of Representatives Workgroup to Develop Strategies for Public Sector Recovery of Damages is one of the six workgroups created by Speaker Larry Cretul, R-Ocala. This group is concluding its work shortly, and our work will then begin in earnest regarding the development of new, sustainable economic recovery opportunities for those areas most affected by the oil spill.

**Evaluation of Academic Delivery across the State University System**

We are no strangers to budget reductions and the ongoing challenges of the Legislature to balance demands amid continually constricting state revenues. Our institutions have conducted evaluation after evaluation to address real and projected funding shortfalls. We continue to make informed decisions about different programs, services and activities.

Universities have developed both measured and sophisticated ways to assess the balance of program productivity and quality of the programs. The question now before us as a System – and one that is equally important to the Legislature – is whether we can apply these efforts to an academic delivery evaluation across the entire System.

Just as the CFOs have taken charge of identifying opportunities through shared services on the business and operations side of the house, the Provosts are best positioned to tackle any “inventory” in the academic arena. To this end, Governor Ann Duncan and I spoke with the Council of Academic Vice Presidents to discuss the benefits of this type of effort – not just for the System’s own knowledge but to strengthen our relationship with the Legislature, which may see its worst single-year deficit for FY 2011-12 in modern times.

Knowledge is our best defense. Several Council members have agreed to lead such an effort that would identify opportunities along the way to producing a report by March 2011. The Board of Governors is expected to address this at its September meeting as the Council begins its work on this issue.

**Student Life Facilities Survey**

As you’ll recall, the state budget requires the Board of Governors to conduct a needs assessment survey of student life facilities and develop recommendations to address any unmet renovations or new needs. The survey has been initiated with a validation of existing student life facilities. The second and final phase will be identifying need. Each university has been asked to complete these two phases by September 30. We are working to complete the survey for Governor Edwards and the Facilities Committee to review prior to the regular session of the Legislature commencing in March 2011.

**2010 Annual Report Preparatory Work Starts**
We have begun to develop the infrastructure for building the 2010 Annual Report in a Web-based format, which will be a new and exciting development. This will, in turn, allow the hard work of the University teams and the Board of Governors staff to be accessible to more audiences and uses. Additional refinements have been designed as well for this year’s report. The institutional reports are due a short time earlier this year (November 19) to allow more time for final processing before the full report is reviewed by the Board at its January 2011 meeting. And while this project will benefit the work of all Board committees — from Budget and Finance to Legislative Affairs, and everything in between — it will be especially useful for Governor Martin and the Strategic Planning committee as they evaluate the Board’s strategic plan this year.

Thank you for your leadership and participation as partners in the State University System.