Update from Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor  
August 31, 2010

**Oil Spill Recovery…Continued**
I know that I led off with oil spill-related information last week, and this week I intend to do the same. This issue continues to be a focus of overwhelming activity in Tallahassee, and so the opportunities for valuable academic input persist.

The Florida House of Representatives, in particular, is fast approaching its self-imposed deadline to hear final reports from its six work groups on their findings and recommendations. There is laser focus in the Legislature to determine and agree upon what issues need attention either right now and/or in the 2011 session, including but not limited to any statutory changes that accelerate economic and environmental recovery.

Meanwhile, multiple assets across the state continue collecting a critical mass of information, historical economic trend data, etc. The amount of dedication and manpower exerted in recent months is compelling – especially when you consider that these are all the same offices and staffers who both endure and prepare for each regular legislative/budget cycle. This includes university and System staff as well.

As I mentioned last week, the State University System has been asked to participate more formally on the Gulf Oil Spill Economic Recovery Task Force, which is the “global leader” of the overall Florida effort. As a part of this group’s data collection efforts, it requires all agencies – including universities – to account for expenditures related to the oil spill recovery. The System coordinated and compiled the requested information.

Thus far, eight of our universities have incurred expenses of approximately $2.4 million that is directly related to the oil spill, including field work and lab research. We also reported a total of $16,000 by the System office staff for oil spill-related work. Once the grants are made in September by the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) from the $10 million sent by BP, we will provide guidance to the universities regarding tracking expenditures tied to FIO grants.
As the FIO grantees prepare to launch their projects, we remain mindful of the messages we provide to the media. As nearly $9 million is fast-tracked and heads to the universities receiving grants in this next phase, we are confident that University experts, scientists, and researchers will continue to offer their perspectives, rooted and grounded in sound data. We have an inordinate obligation in this regard as stewards of the public trust.

Finally, on August 26, the Governor issued a new Executive Order that extends the state of emergency status for the oil spill, and narrows the number of active counties to seven (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf and Franklin), now that the emergent crisis issues related to capping the well have been addressed.

**Enrollment is Up**
Even at a time when the State University System faces ongoing fiscal challenges, we continue our commitment to provide access to world-class higher education. As of Friday, preliminary enrollment numbers show an increase of more than 2% for the System as a whole. Once the deadline for students to withdraw from classes expires, we will be able to report more details about the enrollment figures for each university. We owe a debt of gratitude to the faculty and staff for their continuing service of and dedication to the students of Florida's state universities.

**Communications & Government Relations Projects**
Both of these areas are busy with advance planning for projects that require extensive collaboration to assemble and execute. I am very pleased that, for the first time in the Board of Governors' history, communications and government relations leaders from all 11 universities gathered in Tampa to increase coordination and collaboration regarding System priorities.

Of the many proactive communications activities being pursued, several television projects are under way. Among them:

- We have arranged for all 11 Presidents to tape a “10 Questions” segment for The Florida Channel.
- At the September Board meeting, each Board member will be invited to tape a short interview regarding New Florida and the role of the State University System. We will be utilizing this content for a variety of purposes as we continue our efforts with the Legislature to sustain its investment moving forward.

On the legislative front, I held a conference call with the 11 Presidents to discuss the System’s 2011 substantive policy agenda for the Florida Legislature. The list of issues is coming together for review by the Board at its September meeting in Jacksonville. Further, on November 5 (after the Board meeting in Gainesville),
university and System staff will hold the annual planning meeting to prepare for our next round of federal funding opportunities.

**PECO Project Priority List**
Because there is a PECO Estimating Conference scheduled for November, we have decided to defer the final development of a PECO Project Priority List, which traditionally has occurred at the September Board meeting each year. We want to take advantage of additional data and analysis before finalizing the list. At the September meeting in Jacksonville, the Board will have the information necessary to adopt a preliminary overall PECO budget of $220 million. At the January meeting, the Board would finalize and approve the subsequent priority list.

**Tuition and Fee Work Group Update**
Governor Tico Perez has hosted the second meeting of the Tuition and Fee Work Group. Our thanks go to this team for drafting regulation language for proposals regarding new and existing fees; these recommendations will proceed to the Budget and Finance Committee at the September Board meeting. There was lengthy discussion regarding block tuition, and draft language will be prepared for the work group’s consideration. There was discussion on market-rate tuition, and more research will be done in this area.

**Student Financial Aid and Bright Futures**
Recently, there has been extensive media interest in the changes to Bright Futures. Though the Bright Futures program will no longer cover a student’s full tuition, the System continues to identify opportunities for expanding need-based aid. For example, 30 percent of tuition differential fees collected is dedicated to needs-based aid. This is a message we should carry and emphasize, as the end result is more help to those who need it — keeping all of our universities affordable and accessible.

Also, I was pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives recently approved H.R. 1586, which would provide $16.1 billion to extend Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentages (FMAP) for another six months, and $10 billion for education assistance nationwide. If H.R. 1586 had not passed, it would have added approximately $1 billion to Florida’s looming budget deficit. As it stands now, Florida’s share is projected at $784 million in FMAP and $555 million for education. The Legislature will have some discretion on the $555 million. Our Washington team will continue to monitor this closely as it makes its way to President Obama’s desk.
Last but not least, System staff are working with university representatives to gather extensive data for a Student Financial Aid Issues workshop we intend to hold at the November Board meeting.

Outreach Efforts
Last week I travelled to Jacksonville to meet with UNF President John Delaney and Dr. Steve Wallace, President of Florida State College at Jacksonville. We had a very good conversation centered on the importance of continued coordination between the members of the State University System and those of the Florida College System. We also discussed the role of the new Higher Education Coordinating Council relative to statewide coordination; the HECC will meet for the first time this fall. President Delaney and President Wallace will offer remarks at the September Board meeting in Jacksonville.

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