Update from Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor
October 25, 2010

As the electorate keeps an eye on the November 2 elections and the corresponding, unprecedented new levels of campaign and constitutional amendment information, I would like to look ahead to the post-elections work that we are preparing for as a System.

The Board of Governors has put in place numerous organizational elements that help to set our priorities, thereby enhancing the ability to work through issues and deliver those results as a System. As it pertains to legislative issues, this same approach becomes essential to our successes at both the state and national levels, and I want to thank Gov. Dean Colson for his leadership of the Legislative Affairs committee, which is staffed by Rick Maxey.

- At the federal level, congressional leaders concluded business September 29 to return to the districts. Just prior to departing, Congress passed a continuing resolution to maintain funding levels for most government programs through December 3. Upon re-commencing work later this year, Congress will address the fate of expiring 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, further extension of unemployment benefits, and perhaps act on the expected recommendations of a presidential panel offering ways to grapple with budget deficits that have pushed public debt above $13 trillion. If the panel can reach consensus (its report is due December 1), congressional leaders promise a vote on a long-term deficit reduction plan before year’s end. Chair Ava L. Parker and I appreciate the ongoing and steadfast commitment of our entire Congressional Delegation, as well as the System’s D.C. lobbyist Brent Jaquet and his team in Washington as they closely monitor and advocate for our issues. We will be putting together our collaborative System-wide 2011 federal funding approach in the months to come.

- At the state level, earlier estimates of the budget crisis (in the $5-6 billion range) now appear to be more in the neighborhood of $2.5 billion — still a challenge, albeit a slightly less frightening one. We have been grateful for the opportunity to work with the House and Senate on oil spill economic recovery issues – legislative leaders immediately looked to the confluence...
of the New Florida Initiative as a potential tie-in to better diversify the North Florida economy. Speaker Designate Dean Cannon has announced that the House will hold policy workshops, December 7-9 and new member orientation on December 9-10. There has been no official communication from the Senate on the schedule for an organizational session, but we expect that they will coincide with activities planned in the House. Keep in-mind that this will be our first full legislative committee and Session cycle since vacating the governance lawsuit – an important step that seems eons ago but is still very relevant, and we look forward to a close working relationship with the Legislature as we move the System forward.

On a related note, I want to thank Governor Gallop Franklin for working with our media liaison on a quick, high-yield press effort intended to urge the students throughout our System to “study up” on the ballot and amendments – and vote. There was significant TV coverage, with his interview leading the story. It goes without saying that our students today both benefit from and carry any burden of their government’s decisions now and in the years to come.

Financial Aid Workshop Rescheduled
Following conversations with Board leadership, we have decided to reschedule the Financial Aid Workshop, which was slated to take place at the November Board meeting. Shifting it to the January meeting will allow for greater synergy with the Board mini-retreat, which will occur at that time. You know how important this issue is for our System, and we want to ensure the Board has an opportunity to take part in a rich and deep dialogue on the matter.

“Evolve or Die”
On October 12, Commissioner Eric Smith and I delivered remarks to the Florida Chamber’s 2010 “Future of Florida Forum” in Orlando. The theme for this year’s gathering was “Evolve or Die,” and it offered a prime opportunity to speak about our New Florida Initiative. My presentation featured several of our universities – reminding the audience and top business leaders how many products on the market today have their origin in the State University System of Florida. (The PowerPoint is posted at: http://www.flbog.edu/new_florida). All our research universities had a good presence in the exhibition space, with passionate and informed representatives for each. Many were actively seeking investment funds to achieve the next growth plateau. U.S. Senators Bill Nelson and George LeMieux were at the event, as well as a number of state legislators, including House Speaker Larry Cretul, Senate President-designate Mike Haridopolos, House Speaker-designate Dean Cannon, Rep. Will Weatherford, and many others.
In other events the past week, I also attended FAU’s groundbreaking for the student housing and stadium project in its Innovation Village; spoke to the FAMU Faculty Senate as its full regular meeting; and participated in the FAMU School of Business & Industry Forum Series. The Forum served as a reminder that the core of our efforts are and will continue to be educating students who will someday be the leaders of our business community. The FAMU School of Business & Industry Forum Series is a prime example of how we must prepare students to operate in an international economy by infusing communication and entrepreneurial skills throughout our programs and not just address them in stand alone courses.

Finally, Chair Parker and I were proud to participate in New College’s 50th Anniversary event in Sarasota along with local business and legislative leaders. As you know, New College is among the top 10 liberal arts colleges in the nation producing the most Fulbright student scholarships. On a per capita basis, its students reach this honor at higher rates than counterparts at many research universities, including those in the Ivy League. The Fulbright program turns out those who are later winners of the Nobel and Pulitzer prizes, members of Congress, and heads of state. This year, seven New College students won Fulbright grants to study or teach overseas, and last year, there were eight.

**Coming Up**
We continue to emphasize the important role and timeliness of the dialogue that will occur as the Higher Education Coordinating Council gears up. The Council will have its organizational meeting on Tuesday from 9 a.m.-noon. See the agenda (under “Materials”) at the web site: www.floridahighereducation.org. The meeting will be streamed live from our web site, www.flbog.edu.

Thank you for your leadership of the State University System.