Brogan advocates for universities

Chancellor seen as visionary

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By Angeline J. Taylor
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

Frank Brogan, chancellor of Florida's university system, was deemed a visionary after he spoke during the Capital Tiger Bay Club luncheon Thursday.

Brogan became the chancellor of the state's 11 public universities in mid-September after serving as president of Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. He had just signed a six-year contract with FAU when the challenge to serve as chancellor was presented to him.

"At the end of the day, I'm a sucker for a challenge," Brogan said. "I don't think we have an opportunity. I think we have an obligation to think about how we're to come out of this recession.

"Are we going to limp out of this recession? Or are we going to slingshot out of this thing?"

He said that Florida's public universities face "one of the greatest challenges in the United States." The challenge, he said, was to position the state's universities in such a way that "we will become the envy of the nation."

One way to better position the universities, Brogan said, is to create a predictable source of funding for the state system.

When he considers the challenge, he thinks about his son, 4-year-old Colby John.

"At the end of the day I want a seamless system of education for my 4-year-old son to live here, stay here and raise his whole family," Brogan said.

Brogan thanked the 100 or so Tiger Bay members in attendance before taking questions from the group. Their questions entailed the state's pre-pay program and how state universities will secure more residency programs for medical students.

Doug Darling with the Department of Environmental Protection called Brogan a visionary.

"I think (his vision) positions the state to leverage higher education like we haven't in the past," Darling said. "I'm more than a little hopeful that he can prevail in his request. It will be difficult in an election year."