Funding of Florida's State University System is sliding down a slippery slope, and there is no sight of the bottom yet.

The first signs of a stressed system are appearing as the average student needs an additional semester to graduate.

There are not enough faculty to offer enough courses for the students.

Another sign of stress: Florida's state universities have the worst student-faculty ratios in the nation.

Then consider that Florida has the lowest tuition and fees in the nation.

Florida's average of $3,361 in tuition and fees compares to the national average of $6,200.

That's a good thing, so long as state funding supports costs.

But Florida can't afford to have the lowest tuition in the nation much longer, not if the state continues to cut subsidies and student enrollment continues to grow.

In recent years, state support for the university system has been cut by dramatic levels. A recent reduction of about $100 million is equivalent to eliminating an entire university's budget.

Universities don't get closed, of course, so the university system has coped with too many students in classes and not enough faculty to teach the courses. That can't continue. As a result, the Board of Governors is considering limits on enrollment.
There also is a risk that good faculty, sensing that budget reductions have become a way of life, will begin leaving the Florida university system. Faculty salaries have been stagnant in recent years.

As good faculty leave, they are more difficult to replace, given the salary stresses.

The Board of Governors recently instituted an 8 percent tuition increase effective this fall. The board directed that 70 percent of the increase be used to improve student-faculty ratios and 30 percent should go to need-based aid.

With post-high school education becoming a necessity for career success, the state needs to provide more need-based aid.

Low tuition should be encouraged as long as the State University System has enough revenue.

But there comes a point when it begins to affect quality.

Nobody likes tuition increases, but if other funding sources are being cut, something has to give.


**Office of the Chancellor**

**Changes proposed to 'save' Bright Futures scholarships**
02/13/2008 © Daytona Beach News-Journal

Pressure to change Florida's popular merit-aid scholarship program is growing.

The universities' governing body will convene next week to discuss a paper written by Chancellor Mark Rosenberg titled "Bright Futures: Change It to Save It."

But considering the fate of a bill filed last month by Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Margate, any attempts to tweak Bright Futures will meet heavy resistance.
The 10-year-old Bright Futures -- which rewards students who earn a minimum 3.0 grade-point average and score 970 or better on their SATs -- was designed to encourage more four-year degrees and keep more students in Florida.

And it has succeeded on those fronts, contends state Sen. Evelyn Lynn, R-Ormond Beach.

The problem, she notes, is that every time tuition is increased, the cost of Bright Futures also goes up, as its awards are 100 and 75 percent of tuition.

The program has grown to cost nearly $400 million, while failing to address the needs of students who could do well in college but cannot afford it. Meanwhile, Ring and others have called for changes that would encourage more students to go into STEM -- science, technology, engineering and mathematics -- fields.

"We feel there is an urgency to make these funds work harder for Florida," Rosenberg said in a telephone interview Tuesday.

In a memo designed to generate discussion among the Board of Governors, who oversee the university system, Rosenberg writes that Florida "obviously" cannot continue to fund Bright Futures.

One of his talking points suggests cutting the $400 million going to students who earned Bright Futures scholarships in half, divvying up the $200 million evenly among eligible students but not guaranteeing the current 100 and 75 percent tuition funding. Another $100 million would go to needy students while the remaining money would be used to provide incentives for STEM programs and other areas of need -- education and health.

The Board of Governors will discuss the proposals at a meeting Feb. 21 but it would be up to lawmakers to change Bright Futures.

Rosenberg and Lynn concur that any changes to Bright Futures should be phased in over a number of years.

The political popularity of Bright Futures is real, as Ring can attest.

The Senate sophomore who was the first sales executive for Yahoo! filed a bill less than three weeks ago laden with incentives for more students to study the STEM fields, which he believes would give Florida a better chance at developing technology entrepreneurs like Yahoo!
The bill would give greater Bright Futures awards to students in needed fields but would reduce awards for students in other majors, such as philosophy, music and English.

Will Anderson, a University of Florida student who has a Bright Futures scholarship, started a Facebook group opposed to the bill. Some 17,000 people joined, helping to generate dozens of letters to lawmakers.

Ring, in an interview Tuesday, acknowledged that opposition to his bill has caused him to reconsider. He intends to rewrite the bill, restoring the funding for non-STEM majors.

Indian teachers remain in limbo
02/14/2008 © Palm Beach Post

PORT ST. LUCIE — Sixteen Indian teachers working in St. Lucie County schools as part of a cultural exchange program were kept from their classrooms a third day Wednesday, as they waited to hear whether an error in their visas would result in deportation to India.

The teachers were placed on unpaid leave Friday when their visas expired. They will be deported on March 9, following a 30-day period, if the visas are not extended for the rest of the academic year.

Their predicament, coming in the midst of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, is rapidly becoming a difficult and embarrassing situation for both the St. Lucie County School District, which had to hire substitute teachers to cover the classrooms, and Florida Atlantic University, which was responsible for applying for the teachers' visas.

University officials expected to hear from the State Department early this week, but were still waiting late Wednesday. They said they had been in contact with department officials and were hopeful that the issue would be resolved "very soon."

"Everybody wants to get those teachers back into the classroom. They're doing an excellent job," said Gregory Aloia, dean of the College of Education for FAU.
The university recruited the teachers, all of whom have master's degrees and multiple years of experience, as part of a pilot program to fill much-needed positions in math, science and special education. Teachers went to six St. Lucie schools, including Treasure Coast High, Southport Middle and Dan McCarty Middle.

They spent the first half of the school year on probationary status that ended in January, said Susan Ranew, the district's assistant superintendent of human resources.

Of the 17 teachers who arrived in St. Lucie in August, 16 were asked to stay when their probationary period ended, she said. They were paid about $5,000 each for the first half of the year and started earning a regular teaching salary in January.

The teachers were issued short-term visas when they arrived, which should have had an option to extend through the rest of the academic year. University officials discovered in late November that the wrong visas, which lacked the extension option, had been issued.

They were unsure whether the error was the fault of the university or the State Department, Aloia said.

"That's what's being discussed with the State Department," he said.

University officials said they plan to review the operations of all international programs and the visas associated with them. They already have done an initial review of about 93 visas and found no similar problems. Most are for doctoral candidates doing research, said Kristine McGrath, a spokeswoman for the university.

News of the teachers' situation spread rapidly through the Indian community this week. Many expressed concern that the teachers, already paid so little, would be hurt financially if sent back to India or forced to stay out of the classroom for long.

Legally, the teachers cannot work or receive a wage until their visas are extended.

"The longer this goes on, the more likely they are to be upset or suffer," said Amita Singh, a member of the Atlantic India Association in St. Lucie County.
Singh said she has at times dropped food off at the homes of some of the teachers. She said the community would do "whatever needs to be done" to see that they are cared for.

Vinesh Bahl, another member of the Atlantic India Association, also noted that, if sent home, the teachers' situation would be considered a shame to their families and could cause problems socially.

"The first reaction will be, 'They must not have done their jobs right,' " he said.

Prolonged absence or deportation of the teachers also could be difficult for the school district. Students took the writing portion of the FCAT this week and will take the reading, math and science exams next month.

While none of the teachers facing deportation teaches courses connected to this round of FCATs, some handled homerooms where the tests were administered.

At Southport Middle School, five teachers from the program were absent. Substitutes filled in, and Principal Mary Mosley asked two experienced teachers to administer the writing test to those homerooms that were missing their teachers.

She didn't know what would happen if the teachers did not return to school.

"I don't have anyone to replace them," she said. "It's a real loss to our students."

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**Florida Gulf Coast University**

No Articles Today

**Florida International University**

No Articles Today

**Florida State University**

**Gays and lesbians seek protection at FSU**

02/14/2008 © Tallahassee Democrat

Gay and lesbian students and faculty took their fight against Florida State University's non-discrimination policy to the steps of the Westcott administration building Wednesday.
At issue for the group of about 80 people in attendance is a statement which governs and protects civil rights of students, faculty, staff, visitors, applicants and contractors. Protest organizers believe FSU's current 2008 equal opportunity policy is incomplete.

They say the words sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression should be added to protect all groups.

"Adding sexual orientation and gender identity to FSU's non-discrimination policy is a logical extension of the practice of a level playing field," said Ashley Ruiz-Margenot, assistant director of FSU's Women's Center. "The result will be a strong message of equality and inclusion to all prospective students, employees and donors."

FSU's existing clause is in compliance with state law, said Browning Brooks, FSU's director of news and public affairs. The clause is: "Florida State University is committed to a policy of non-discrimination for any member of the University's community on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran's or marital status or any other protected group status."

Neither organizers, students nor faculty believed administrators of the state university were the enemy. Zachary Dryden, executive director of Pride Student Union, said he appreciated the listening ears of two administrators in particular — Provost Larry Abele and Vice President of Student Affairs Mary Coburn.

Coburn, who attended the rally, spoke about the desire to knock down barriers so all student groups could feel included.

"I support student rights. ... Has it been easy? No it's been slow and a long-time coming. But we are working on building bridges and I think your T-shirts say it best: that love is never wrong, " Coburn said.

Coburn, however, didn't commit to changing the policy.

The Pride Student Union and the Coalition for an Equitable Community began their fight in September. Then, the concern was that the student union board was going to change its policy which included: sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. That wording, the groups believed, was fair and more inclusive than the university's policy. Now, the organizations have focused on the university's policy.
Jay Lightner, director of the LGBTQ Student Resource Center, said FSU is in a small group of the public university system which does not include the three critical words they seek to add. He said Florida A&M, Florida Atlantic and Florida Gulf Coast universities do not include these words in their equal opportunity clauses.

The groups' next step is to ask the Student Government Association to stop funding five organizations on campus with policies that are not inclusive.

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New College of Florida

No Articles Today

University of Central Florida

No Articles Today

University of Florida

Editorial: No sacred cows
02/14/2008 © Gainesville Sun

Well, we certainly hope that University of Florida President Bernie Machen didn't say "agriculture is a dying industry" and "not worthy of the investment" the state makes in farming.

Continue to 2nd paragraph Not only would that be erroneous, it would be, well, impolitic.

Machen has denied making those statements, published in the online Farm & Ranch News. The publication insists he was quoted accurately.

Whether he said it or not, all of a sudden Machen is in the cross hairs of the ag lobby. Representatives for the industry say UF's president doesn't understand farming, and they are worried that he intends to start slashing UF's agricultural research efforts and county extension services.

A dentist by training who has not had a great deal of experience working in land-grant universities - institutions like UF that were originally chartered with a strong agricultural service component - Machen may indeed lack a good working knowledge of the needs of agriculture and of UF's historic commitment to meeting those needs.
But the truth is that Machen has a larger and more challenging problem than his perceived lack of appreciation for Florida farming.

This year, the university may have to cut its budget by as much as $50 million. This on top of deep budget cuts last year, and very likely a prelude to still more cuts next year. Caught between rising demands for admission and shrinking per-student state funding, UF is faced with the prospect of enrollment caps, faculty layoffs, program terminations and other Draconian measures.

Does UF, as a land-grant institution, have a special responsibility to serve the needs of Florida agriculture? Absolutely. Does that mean that IFAS and its network of extension services hold sacred cow status and must be held harmless from the budget cuts that are coming? Absolutely not.

"I am committed to making targeted reductions in programs, instead of across-the-board cuts," Machen said in a statement this week. "All parts of the university, including IFAS, will be impacted."

How could it be otherwise? With the university in the position of having to turn away thousands of qualified Florida students, how can IFAS be exempted from cutbacks?

Make no mistake, the cuts that are occurring at UF and at other state universities in Florida are devastating. Florida charges the lowest tuition in the nation, and has the highest faculty-student ratios. Those two facts are not unrelated.

And so long as Gov. Charlie Crist and the Florida Legislature refuse to properly invest in a quality higher education system, Florida's young people, and its economic well-being, will suffer. And as one of the state's economic mainstays, agriculture will suffer as well.

We would suggest to the ag lobby, that the problem is not Bernie Machen, but rather state politicians who are content to slash taxes, slash spending and watch vital public institutions like UF slowly erode for lack of sufficient funding.

What Machen doesn't know about Florida agriculture would likely fill volumes. But he knows this much: It isn't possible to continue to withstand yearly budget cuts in the tens of millions of dollars and still protect all of UF's sacred cows.
A report that the University of Florida president insulted the agriculture industry has rallied farmers to the defense of farm programs at the university and throughout the state.

An online edition of an agriculture newspaper reported UF President Bernie Machen said "agriculture is a dying industry in the state of Florida" and "not worthy of the investments being made by the Legislature" in the university's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. He has denied making the statements.

But the report has raised questions about whether IFAS, and specifically its extension programs, will be cut disproportionately as UF slashes its overall budget. It has also given farmers an opportunity to vent long-standing concerns about Machen's management style and perceived lack of support for UF's land-grant mission.

State representatives Debbie Boyd, D-Newberry, and Bryan Nelson, R-Apopka, met Friday with Machen about the comments. Nelson said Machen denied making the statements but left open the possibility that IFAS will face a larger proportion of budget cuts than other parts of the university.

"Make no mistake - he avoided that question." Nelson said. "He didn't say they were or weren't. He never committed either way."

Farm & Ranch News, a monthly newspaper based in Tampa, first reported the comments Feb. 5 on its Web site. The story also said Machen planned to cut IFAS faculty positions, extension offices and research centers.

Publisher George Parker said he stands by the report, which included a call to contact Machen and university trustees. UF officials report receiving more than 30 letters, including one from the son of citrus magnate and stadium namesake Ben Hill Griffin.

Machen issued a statement in which he denied the comments and said he was "appalled" that they weren't retracted. But he wrote that the university faces a difficult financial situation and must make $50 million in cuts by July 1.

"I am committed to making targeted reductions in programs instead of across-the-board cuts," he wrote. "All parts of the university, including IFAS, will be impacted."

Members of the agriculture industry said the controversy has elevated longstanding concerns about Machen.
Pat Cockrell, executive director of the Florida Farm Bureau, said the report confirmed suspicions among some farmers that Machen does not appreciate the industry.

"It's always been a little bit of perception in everyone's minds that maybe he doesn't understand agriculture or maybe he doesn't understand land-grant institutions because he's never been in one," he said.

In the 1800s, the U.S. government granted federally controlled land to educational institutions such as UF. These land-grant universities were required to include agriculture in their missions, which was later expanded to include agricultural research stations and extension offices.

Machen has previously worked for universities - including the University of Michigan and University of Utah - that are not land-grant institutions and instead have missions based in research.

Machen declined comment for this story. He said in a letter to Boyd and Nelson that the university "is committed to making programmatic cuts that minimize the impact on education and research."

To some in the farming community, such a statement suggests that the extension service could feel the brunt of cuts. IFAS' structure is sometimes called a "three-legged stool" that includes the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, research efforts and the extension offices.

"If you cut out extension, you've cut out one leg from the three-legged stool," said Gainesville rancher Roger West.

The UF/IFAS Extension is a partnership between state, federal and county governments to provide scientific expertise to the public. Each of Florida's 67 counties has an extension office, which includes the 4-H and Master Gardener programs.

IFAS received about $159 million in state money in 2006-07, 22 percent of which went to the extension program, according to figures provide by IFAS. Institute officials say the university provides $8 million to the county extension offices while those offices receive another $45 million from county governments and federal grants.

Rep. Boyd said those offices could face a double dose of cuts because state budget constraints are also forcing counties to cut back. She cited statistics
showing about 8.6 million state residents have used services provided by extension offices, or about half the state population.

"They may not be cutting the education of students but they are affecting all of our citizens," she said.

The controversy has allowed farmers to vent other concerns about Machen.

The Farm Bureau's Cockrell said some in the agriculture industry say Machen relegates their concerns to Jimmy Cheek, a senior vice president who heads IFAS.

"The industry felt like the president should have been a little more accessible," he said.

Ocala agriculture attorney and rancher Marty Smith said farmers have had better relationships with some previous university presidents. He said the reported comments led farmers to rally to defend their industry.

"Whenever something happens that looks like IFAS is being put to the test ... it gets folks up in arms," he said.

Nelson, who graduated from UF with a degree in ornamental horticulture, said he's gathering signatures from lawmakers concerned about IFAS cuts. He's collected 60 so far.

He said he left his meeting with Machen feeling "better than when I went into the meeting but not as good as I hoped."

He said he was encouraged by Machen's comment that his wife, Chris, is a member of the 4-H foundation board.

"He said â€˜if I cut the 4-H program, I'd probably come home to a cold meal'," Nelson said.

**Possible Sources In Machen Tiff Narrowed to 50**

02/14/2008 © Lakeland Ledger

The list of suspected leakers fingering University of Florida President Bernie Machen for controversial comments on the death of Florida agriculture has been narrowed to about 50 people, The Ledger learned Wednesday.
Machen's spokeswoman, Janine Sikes, again denied the president recently said "agriculture is a dying industry in the State of Florida" and "not worthy of the investments being made by the Legislature" in the UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

The Ledger learned the disclosure of Machen's statements likely emerged from a Jan. 28 meeting at Florida Farm Bureau in Gainesville attended by more than 50 top IFAS administrators, including Jimmy Cheek, its chief executive.

According to one IFAS official at the Jan. 28 meeting, Cheek told the group he and Machen had a private conversation earlier this year on the budget cuts. Machen told Cheek at the time IFAS would absorb a disproportionate share of the cuts.

Subsequently Cindy Littlejohn, the chief IFAS lobbyist in Tallahassee, reported to Cheek that many legislators were asking questions about the pending budget cuts, said the IFAS source, who asked for anonymity to protect his job. Cheek returned to Machen and asked permission to discuss the matter with his top staff.

Machen gave Cheek the OK, which led to the Jan. 28 meeting. During that meeting, the IFAS source said, he heard Cheek disclose Machen's "agriculture is a dying industry" statement.

He did not recall hearing the second statement that IFAS was "not worthy of the investments," but neither could he discount it.

Jack Battenfield, an IFAS spokesman, said Cheek has been asked if he is the source for Machen's comments.

Cheek's response was, "I have never heard him make that statement," according to Battenfield.

Machen and Cheek were not available to speak to The Ledger on Wednesday, their representatives said.

The controversy over the statements has not died down, university and agriculture officials told The Ledger.

"Absolutely, it's a top priority," said Mike Sparks, chief executive at Florida Citrus Mutual in Lakeland, the state's largest growers representative. "Florida agriculture is absolutely united on this. We're not going down without a fight."
That was the unanimous feeling among other Florida agriculture leaders at the "Future of Agriculture" forum Tuesday at the Florida State Fair, Sparks said.

Machen's comments were reported first on Feb. 5 in an online edition of Tampa-based Farm & Ranch News.

The story reported IFAS would sustain a disproportionate share of a proposed $50 million cut in university programs. The cuts and the statements attributed to Machen generated an enormous backlash among the state's agricultural groups.

Following Machen's denials, Publisher George Parker Jr. told The Ledger on Monday he stands by the story. He said the statements came from "multiple sources" with knowledge of Machen's statements.

Ben Hill Griffin III, chief executive officer of Ben Hill Griffin Inc. in Frostproof, one of the state's largest growers, told The Ledger on Wednesday he had "first-hand information" regarding Machen's statements from a "reliable and trustworthy source."

Griffin declined to elaborate on his source and suggested The Ledger contact Cheek. The comments prompted Griffin to write a Feb. 1 letter to Machen.

"I have just been informed of some most disturbing news concerning IFAS. IFAS has been and continues to be vital to Florida agriculture as well as the state of Florida," he wrote.

He would not have written the letter if he didn't believe the reports regarding Machen's statements and budget proposals, Griffin said.

The latest controversy is not the first time Machen has gotten in trouble with Florida agriculture.

"It's always been a little bit of perception in everyone's minds that maybe he doesn't understand agriculture," Pat Cockrell, executive director of Florida Farm Bureau, told The Gainesville Sun.

The Ledger's IFAS source also related a report from an employee who attended a meeting in early 2007, when Machen spoke to a group interested in sustainable agriculture.

The employee reported Machen told the group that everybody knows the citrus industry is dead and the rest of agriculture is dying.
Machen's office has already received more than 30 letters opposing plans to cut the IFAS budget, his spokeswoman Sikes said.

More are on the way, said Sparks. Citrus and other Florida agriculture sectors are gearing up for a big grass-roots campaign, including lobbying efforts in the Legislature, which will begin its session in March.

Machen will have a detailed proposal of the $50 million in cuts by early April, Sikes said.

University of North Florida
No Articles Today

University of South Florida

Financial audit by state prompts changes at USF
02/14/2008 © St. Petersburg Times

TAMPA - The University of South Florida last year had more than a dozen deficiencies and weaknesses in its financial operations, according to a just-released state audit that documents problems in areas such as travel reimbursements, cell phone use, the monitoring of vendors contracts, and the collection of student tuition.

The Florida auditor general, in an operational audit for the budget year that ended in June, found USF was not fully complying with rules for employee cell phone use, travel expenses, and employees' use of university purchasing cards.

USF administrators will discuss the audit and their response during a trustees meeting on the Tampa this morning. The audit indicates USF officials have already addressed many of auditors' concerns, with a goal of resolving them by this summer.

According to the audit:

-USF's Florida Mental Health Institute maintains a $12,000 bank account meant to quickly pay research survey participants, but the account's custodian had excessive access to blank and signed checks.

The custodian also was too easily able to change information in the account management system, increasing the risk "of cash being misappropriated,"
according to the audit. The auditors could not find evidence that bank account reconciliations for July through October of 2006 were approved by a supervisor.

USF has since tightened its controls to ensure supervisory oversight, chief financial officer Carl Carlucci told auditors earlier this month.

-One employee used a USF purchase card to buy a $1,936 laptop, even though university rules ban laptop purchases over $999. Auditors also found eight purchases totaling $3,180 for items not allowed under USF rules. They included nearly $1,700 in shredders and plaques and $1,440 for autograph books that went to retiring faculty and staff members.

Moreover, USF officials waited as long as 220 days after employees were terminated to cancel their purchase cards, leaving the university at further risk for unauthorized purchases.

Carlucci told auditors USF is revising its card policies, and is quickly canceling fired employees' cards.

-As of April 2007, USF was paying for 167 employees' cell phone service, but did not review the monthly bills to check whether calls were made for personal or work use, as required by the federal government for tax purposes. USF also paid taxes on telephone services for the 2006-07 budget year, even though it is exempt from some federal, state and local taxes.

USF is revising its phone use policies, as the audit recommends.

-Florida statutes allow a maximum mileage reimbursement of 44.5 cents a mile, yet USF reimbursed employees at 48.5 cents a mile last year. Administrators have since fixed the rate to match state guidelines.

-Auditors also found USF wasn't always properly monitoring or documenting some students' residency status, which is critical in determining how much tuition a student owes.

Auditors concluded seven of 40 randomly selected students were being charged in-state Florida resident tuition rates even though documentation proving this was either missing or showed the students should have been charged higher out-of-state rates.

Carlucci said the registrar's office already revised its policies to better track and verify students' place of residency.
USF medical school requests its own hospital
02/14/2008 © St. Petersburg Times

TAMPA - The University of South Florida medical school wants to build its own teaching hospital to reach its goal of becoming a top research university, USF leaders said Wednesday.

A bill filed for the upcoming legislative session could bring that dream a giant step closer to reality. It would allow USF to build a hospital on its campus without getting key permission from state regulators.

"USF medical school, which is now about 40 years old, is one of the few medical schools in America that doesn't have its own hospital," said state Sen. Dennis Jones, R-Seminole, who sponsored the bill after meeting with Dr. Stephen Klasko, medical school dean.

Instead, USF's graduate medical students train and its faculty doctors are on staff at several Tampa Bay area hospitals. Tampa General Hospital is its primary teaching hospital.

A hospital would allow USF to recruit more high-profile faculty members, increase the number of its residents and generate revenue, making it less dependent on state funding, Klasko said Wednesday.

"We are looking at how we can be a vehicle to make Tampa into a greater health care city," he said. "I think it's my responsibility to make sure that this great city has one of the best academic health systems in the country."

What's less clear is how USF's teaching partners, especially at Tampa General, feel about the idea of a new, possibly competing hospital in their back yard.

Ron Hytoff, Tampa General's president and chief executive, declined to answer questions. Instead, he issued a written statement.

"This has created a new wrinkle in an already complicated situation that we are in the process of evaluating," Hytoff said. "Since USF is our strategic partner we do not want to rush to judgment. We are carefully assessing the details of this bill and maintaining a dialogue with the university."

At All Children's Hospital, which teaches USF residents, president and CEO Gary Carnes wasn't available late Wednesday for comment.
If the bill passes, USF wouldn't have to get a state Certificate of Need for the hospital, but it still would have to get the approval of state education officials.

If USF builds its own hospital, it would be a "small but focused" hospital with about 200 beds. It wouldn't take residency slots away from its existing partners, Klasko said. Such signature programs as maternal-fetal medicine would stay at Tampa General, he said.

Nor would it try to imitate H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute or All Children's Hospital.

"Everything we've been talking about would be done cooperatively with Moffitt and Tampa General and All Children's," Klasko said. "It's not meant to be a substitute for them."

Florida already has too few doctors in certain specialties, partly because its residency programs aren't large enough, Jones said. Medical students in Florida often leave the state after they graduate to get further training and never return.

"They would have a catalyst to draw residents from other parts of the U.S.," Jones said. "Even in Pinellas County now, we only have four or five neurosurgeons in a county with a million people."

USF has about 600 residents. Adding a hospital could add 30 to 100 spaces. It would allow USF to revive its defunct anesthesiology program, as well as provide more training in radiology, pathology and orthopedics, Klasko said.

In today's tight budget climate, funding the hospital could be hard. USF might issue bonds or even bring in another hospital as a partner, Klasko said.

But, he said, a hospital would profit USF.

"The ability to garner revenues is a very important part of not having to depend on the state," he said. "I would look at this as exactly what we ought to be doing."
The number of high-school students taking Advanced Placement examinations continues to rise, as does the number of students who perform well on them, according to a report released on Wednesday by the College Board. Yet College Board officials expressed concern about the participation rates and performance of minority students, particularly African-Americans.

The College Board, a nonprofit association, administers 37 different Advanced Placement, or AP, exams that let high-school students earn credit or test out of introductory courses at many colleges. The tests are graded on a scale of 1 to 5, with a score of 3 or higher demonstrating college-level competence. The report notes a study suggesting that even students who score a 1 or 2 on a test may be better prepared in that subject than those in comparable non-AP courses, but it adds that more research is needed on that question.

According to the report, "The 4th Annual AP Report to the Nation," 24.9 percent of the 2.8 million students who graduated from American public high schools in 2007 took at least one AP test, and 15.2 percent of them earned a score of 3 or higher on at least one test. Those numbers are up slightly from the previous year (The Chronicle, February 7, 2007).

**Underrepresentation of African-Americans**

However, only 3.3 percent of the students who scored 3 or higher on a test were African-American, despite the fact that black students represented 14 percent of all high-school seniors last year. Hawaii was the only state in which the percentage of African-American students scoring a 3 or higher matched their overall representation in the student body.

African-American students also are less likely than their peers to take AP classes, said Trevor Packer, who directs the College Board's Advanced Placement program. The board sees a "true and startling lack of equity," Mr. Packer said. "African-American students in particular are not receiving encouragement and support."

Black students accounted for only 7.4 percent of AP test takers last year, according to the report. White students, by contrast, accounted for 61.7 percent of test takers and 64 percent of graduating seniors.
In many states, American Indian and Hispanic students' participation matched their representation in the student body. Nationally, Hispanic students made up 14.6 percent of the high-school-senior population, and 13.6 percent of them scored at least a 3 on an AP test.

Mr. Packer said there were several possible reasons for why the organization had been more successful in encouraging Hispanic students' participation. For one, the Spanish-language AP exam can provide a natural entry point into the AP system. And several states with large Hispanic populations have made a special effort to reach out to the families of Hispanic students, which may have increased their awareness of the AP program.

The College Board itself has several programs that aim to increase the access of minority and low-income students to the courses and tests. Some of those programs reach out to middle-school students. The College Board's goal is for the demographic makeup of test takers who score 3 or higher on an exam to match that of the overall high-school student population.

**Effort on Quality**

College Board officials also discussed on Wednesday the organization's national audit of AP courses. That effort, which began in 2007, is designed to ensure the quality of AP courses taught at high schools across the country.

The audit involved more than 800 college faculty members who reviewed the syllabi for 130,000 AP courses taught in 14,000 high schools. Two-thirds of those courses had passed muster by November, and the rest were allowed to be re-evaluated after the syllabi were adjusted (*The Chronicle*, November 16, 2007). Most of those courses have since been approved, and 93 percent of the submitted courses are now allowed to bear the AP name.

As part of its effort to ensure the quality of AP classes, the College Board also is training both new and returning AP teachers. The board expects more than 30 percent of AP teachers to retire in the next five years.

Even when there are enough AP teachers, their continuing education is crucial, said Jean C. Robinson, a political-science professor at Indiana University at Bloomington. This is particularly true when exams change, which recently happened with the AP exam in comparative government and politics, for which Ms. Robinson is the chief reader. The exam was revised, in part to add Iran to the countries that are covered. That change demanded resources to educate teachers about Iran.
The most popular AP subject in 2007 was U.S. history, followed by the two English exams. That same year, two new subjects, Chinese language and culture, and Japanese language and culture, were introduced.

**Former Fresno State Coach Accepts Reduced Award in Sex-Discrimination Case - Chronicle.com**
02/14/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

A former women's basketball coach at California State University at Fresno who sued the university for sex discrimination will accept a reduced award of $6.6-million, her lawyer said on Wednesday.

A jury had awarded the former coach, Stacy Johnson-Klein, a record $19.1-million in December after an eight-week trial, but last week the judge who presided over the trial, Donald S. Black of the State Superior Court in Fresno County, reduced the amount. He gave Ms. Johnson-Klein until February 22 to accept or reject the reduced sum.

Warren R. Paboojian, Ms. Johnson-Klein's lawyer, did not return a phone call seeking comment. But a woman answering the telephone at Mr. Paboojian's office confirmed that Ms. Johnson-Klein had accepted the reduced amount.

Lawyers for the California State University system had asked Judge Black for a new trial, contending that the damages were excessive and that the verdict was tainted by juror misconduct.

"We're pleased that Ms. Johnson-Klein has moved quickly to accept the judge's ruling," Dawn Theodora, a lawyer for the Cal State system, said in a written statement. "We look forward to resolving this matter."

Ms. Johnson-Klein was fired from Fresno State in 2005 near the end of her third season. In her lawsuit, she argued that Fresno State's athletics department at that time was in disarray, with top officials repeatedly making sexually discriminatory comments. She said she lost her job because she advocated for gender equity and women's rights.

Lawyers for Fresno State disagreed, saying Ms. Johnson-Klein had been verbally abusive to her players and had cheated on her expense reports.

Ms. Johnson-Klein's decision this week to accept the reduced award could bring to an end the third legal dispute stemming from alleged sex discrimination in the university's athletics department.
In July, a California jury awarded $5.85-million to a former volleyball coach who sued for sex discrimination. A judge later reduced that award to $4.5-million. And in October, the university settled a sex-discrimination case filed by a former athletics official for $3.5-million.

Class Warfare: When Getting In Is the Hardest Part - Chronicle.com
02/14/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

Every college has a hot-ticket class. Maybe it's the subject matter (serial killers! sailing!) or maybe it's a celebrity professor (George Tenet! Toni Morrison!). Whatever it is, everybody wants to get in.

And, of course, not everybody can. So how do you decide who gets a seat and who's disappointed?

If you're Patricia de Castries, you make everybody sleep outside your door. Ms. de Castries, assistant director of the Stanford Language Center, teaches a wildly popular wine-tasting course at the university. Often more than 100 would-be connoisseurs compete for the 60 spots, so on the eve of registration students show up with pillows and sleeping bags, hoping to get their names on the list. "It's tough," says Ms. de Castries, "but if you want to be in the class, you do it."

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, they have, not surprisingly, turned to technology. For its humanities requirement, MIT asks students to rank the courses they'd most like to attend. If your No. 1 class is not in demand, then you're in. But if that class is overenrolled, a computer program chooses randomly among all the students who ranked that class as their first choice.

The system had a cameo in Doonesbury a couple of years ago. A character at MIT fails to get into her top choice, then complains that the lottery isn't fair. "Perhaps you should consider a course in probability," the professor replies dryly.

The lottery is supposed to be equitable and impersonal, according to Bette K. Davis, office director of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. But that's not always how it works out. Ms. Davis says that often students who lose the lottery wheedle their way in by talking directly to the professor.

Earlier this semester, a student in an economics course at the University of Chicago tried to sell her spot online. It wasn't just any old economics course, though. The class was taught by Steven D. Levitt, co-author of the enormous best
seller *Freakonomics* and as close to paparazzi-bait as a college professor is likely to get.

"How much is your education worth to you?!?" the ad asked. "E-mail me with your best offer."

The ad was removed soon after it came to the attention of university officials. A Chicago spokeswoman says the university "does not endorse" students' selling their seats in classes.

By contrast, the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton business school actually encourages it. Wharton auctions spots to its M.B.A. students, allowing them to bid for their classes. They don't use real money; instead, students are each given 5,000 points when they enroll and 1,000 more for every credit they earn. An average course might sell for a few hundred points while the most sought-after ones can top 10,000.

Wharton isn't alone in using an auction. Several other business schools and at least one undergraduate institution — Colorado College — let students bid.

But Wharton takes it one step further, allowing students to sell their courses (for points) to other students. It's all done through a Web site. Buyers and sellers are anonymous, so buddies can't make deals. Wharton also uses a second-price auction in which the highest bidder wins, but he or she pays the amount of the second-highest bid. Economists like the second-price auction because they think it encourages more honest bidding.

In other words, Wharton has what may be the most sophisticated, and most confusing, course-registration system ever devised.

And, arguably, the fairest. "It's capitalism gone nuts, but it's also absolute socialism because everyone is born with the same number of points," says Justin Wolfers, an assistant professor of business and public policy.

Because students can place a numerical value on a class, they're better able to express their preferences. If one student bids 500 points and another bids 2,000, then it's clear, in theory, who wants it more.

Students regularly buy classes they don't want to take in hopes of selling them, making a profit, and using those points to buy classes they really do want.

Some take it all very seriously, spending hours strategizing and trading, according to Peggy Lane Bishop, a deputy vice dean and the administrator in
charge of the auction. They study data from previous semesters and try to outsmart their classmates.

Sometimes they outsmart themselves. Students will, for instance, bid on a Friday-afternoon section of a class, assuming that it will be cheaper than the Tuesday section because most students want to get away for the weekend. That will drive the price up until it's higher than the more-desirable Tuesday section.

Serban Suvagau bought a seat in a finance course this semester for 200 points. A couple of days later, he sold it for 900 points. Mr. Suvagau, a second-year student, wasn't really trying to make a profit. He just changed his mind. But he's made some shrewd moves in the past, and he began this semester with a solid 7,800 points.

Not everyone is so fortunate. A few poor bidding decisions can mean getting stuck with a slate of less-desirable classes.

Mr. Suvagau thinks an auction is more fair and efficient than, say, a lottery, but the process can still be annoying, especially if you get outbid. "Complaining about the auction is a big pastime," he says.

It's common knowledge among students which classes sell for a premium and which can be picked up for a song. Professors with more star power command higher prices. It also has to do with how many seats are available. If you restrict your class to 10 students, your price will most likely rise.

Naturally, professors keep an eye on the auction, too. "All professors are egomaniacs, so we care," Mr. Wolfers says. "But we wouldn't admit it."

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