

Economic Development Legislative Activity

Florida is making significant financial investments to create or attract high tech/high wage companies in order to make Florida globally competitive in the 21st century. Companies such as Scripps Research Institute, the Burnham Institute for Medical Research, the Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies, and most recently Oregon Health & Science University now call Florida home. In addition, the Legislature has appropriated nearly \$200 million for centers of excellence and \$20 million to recruit eminent scholars to our universities. The Legislature also established programs that provide support to state universities for taking the products of their research to commercial markets.

One of the elements essential to the success of all of the companies, centers, and endeavors intended to make Florida competitive in the innovation economy is talent. Enterprise Florida lists talent as the first of six priority recommendations in its 2007-2012 strategic plan. The National Governors Association's Council on Competitiveness, in its report on Cluster-based Strategies for Growing State Economies, states that economic development success depends on developing or acquiring talent. It is one of four strategic areas identified in the Florida Chamber's New Cornerstone report. The report states that "Knowledge is the final ingredient that drives innovation, distinguishes products and services, and helps businesses extend their reach globally. The presence of a critical mass of high skilled workers is a powerful attraction for businesses, and is strongly correlated with higher income levels." Providing the talent necessary for Florida's success is a central component of the efforts of the state's public universities.

The Legislature is continuing to seek ways to take advantage of the research capacity in the state with various bills that depend to some degree on the ability of the state universities to carry out their research missions and provide a quality education that serves as the foundation for developing the talent necessary for success. Some of the bills intended to have a positive impact on the state's economy are summarized below.

Key Economic Development Bills in the 2008 Legislative Session

SB 310 Production of energy from biomass by Senator Constantine:

- Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to house "Farm-to-Fuel Grants Program" which can award grants for research, demonstration, or commercialization projects relating to the production of bioenergy or feed stocks used in bioenergy production. Universities and colleges in the state are specified as some of the entities eligible for the matching grants. Matching funds or in-kind contributions are acceptable.

SB 414 Energy by Senator Bennett:

- Creates Florida Alternative Energy Center as a public corporation. It is neither a department of the executive branch, nor functionally located within any state agency or department.
- "Alternative energy" is very broadly defined to encompass biomass, agricultural products and byproducts, landfill, solar, ocean, hydrogen, etc.

- The center is the principal organization in the state for the promotion of alternative energy technology.
- The center shall accomplish its goals by consolidating in-state resources and activities into a unified forum to better coordinate, facilitate, and fund research, development, deployment, and use of alternative energy technologies.
- Create a computerized database accessible by any interested person, all information concerning activities in this state related to programs of alternative energy technology research, development, and deployment in universities, at all levels of government agencies, and in private industry.

HB 237 Biomedical research by Representative Frische :

- \$15 million or 1% of all fines imposed by Department of Health against pharmaceutical companies is provided to an independent biomedical organization in this state for the purpose of developing botanical drugs from PPC.
- **SB 358 by Senator Fasano is identical.**

Senate Joint Resolution 1532:

- Constitutional amendment for \$20 million each of ten fiscal years to Department of Health for grants for embryonic stem cell research using, or using the derivatives of, human embryos that, before or after formation, have been donated to medicine under donor instructions forbidding intrauterine embryo transfer.
- Funds appropriated shall be granted to nonprofit academic and other research institutions situated within the state.

SB 1120 Florida Research Commercialization Matching Grant Program by Senator Gaetz:

- Intended to increase the amount of federal funding coming to this state which will produce the kind of distinctive technologies that drive today's knowledge-based economy.
- Specifically intended to be a catalyst for small or startup companies.
- Statewide advisory committee membership will include Florida university technology commercialization organizations, research institutes in the State, and a member of the Florida Research Consortium, among others.
- Enterprise Florida shall provide staff support to the program.
- **HB 593 by Representative Precourt is identical.**

SB 231 Sure Futures Postgraduate Scholarship Program by Representative Ambler:

- Matches private-sector businesses needing employees having advanced degrees with students who are seeking advanced degrees and employment.

SB 1320 Bright Futures by Senator Ring:

- Provides awards of 110% to students in STEM areas, healthcare fields, and education
- Reduces awards to students majoring in non STEM areas

Table Summarizing SB 1320 Bright Futures by Senator Ring

	Current Bright Futures Award	SB 1320: STEM, Education, Nursing, Health Professional Majors	SB 1320: Non STEM, Nursing, Health Professional Majors
FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS – Public Institutions			
Tuition and fees	100%	110%	80%
College related expenses at public institutions	\$600	\$660	\$475
FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS – Nonpublic Institutions			
Tuition and fees	100% of average tuition and fees at a public institution of the same level	110% of average tuition and fees at a public institution of the same level	80% of average tuition and fees at a public institution of the same level
College related expenses	\$600	\$660	\$475
SCHOOL DISTRICTS			
Florida Academic Scholar in each school district with highest academic ranking	\$1,500	\$1,650	\$1,200
FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS – Public Universities			
Tuition and fees	75%	85%	55%
FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS – Public Community Colleges			
Tuition and fees	100%	110%	80%
FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS – Nonpublic Institutions			
	75% of average tuition and fees at a public institution of the same level	85% of average tuition and fees at a public institution of the same level	55% of average tuition and fees at a public institution of the same level
GOLD SEAL VOCATIONAL SCHOLARS - Public			
Tuition and fees	75%	85%	55%
GOLD SEAL VOCATIONAL SCHOLARS - Nonpublic			
Tuition and fees	75%	85%	55%