

Committee on Higher Education

HB 7129— State Universities of Academic and Research Excellence and National Preeminence

by Education Committee and Rep. Proctor and others (CS/CS/SB 1752 by Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations; Higher Education Committee; and Senators Oelrich and Lynn)

This bill provides tuition and academic flexibility to research universities that meet standards established in the bill for a state university of national preeminence. The standards include selectivity of admissions, student retention, graduation rates, size of endowment, amount of annual giving, faculty membership in a national academy, number of patents awarded, number of doctoral degrees awarded, number of postdoctoral appointees, two categories of research expenditures, and three types of national rankings.

After approval by the university board of trustees and the Board of Governors, a university that meets at least 11 of the 14 criteria in the bill may:

- Charge differentiated or market-rate tuition and fees beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year, notwithstanding the statutory percentages and dollar amount limitations on university fees; and
- Require incoming freshmen students to take from nine to twelve credits in a set of courses specifically determined by the university.

An increase in fees may take place no more than once each year and must be implemented in the fall term.

Florida Prepaid College contracts purchased prior to a university's becoming authorized to charge market-rate tuition must be honored and the beneficiaries will be exempt from paying the tuition increases. Beneficiaries of prepaid contracts purchased in the first year a university receives authority to charge market-rate tuition and thereafter, will have to pay the difference between the highest rate of tuition and fees covered by the contract and the university's tuition.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 36-3; House 85-28