

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2016 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Higher Education

SB 576 — Public Educational Facilities

by Senator Flores

The bill (Chapter 2016-32, L.O.F.) authorizes the construction of dormitories for up to 300 beds on a Florida College System institution campus located within a municipality designated as an area of critical state concern and having a comprehensive plan and land development regulations containing a building permit allocation system that limits annual growth.

However, the bill prohibits the use of state funds and tuition and fee revenues for construction, debt service payments, maintenance, or operation of the dormitories. Furthermore, the bill prohibits additional dormitory beds constructed after July 1, 2016, from being financed through the issuance of a bond.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Higher Education

CS/HB 793 — Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

by Education Appropriations Subcommittee; and Rep. O'Toole and others (CS/SB 520 by Fiscal Policy Committee; and Senators Lee, Gaetz, Stargel, and Montford)

The bill modifies student eligibility and award provisions of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

The bill modifies student eligibility requirements of the program. Specifically, the bill:

- Specifies that “community” service work means “volunteer” service work and prohibits students from receiving remuneration or academic credit for such work. Volunteer service work is expanded to include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The bill further requires documentation of volunteer service work performed.
- Defers the 2-year initial award period and the 5-year renewal period for students who are unable to accept an award due to full-time religious or service obligations lasting at least 18 months until the student completes the obligation.
- Removes the higher SAT and ACT score requirement for home education program students to qualify for the initial Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award, making the test score requirement the same for all students.

The bill creates the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award as an alternative to the current Florida Gold Seal Vocational award. Specifically, the bill:

- Creates the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award for a student who meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program, earns a minimum of five postsecondary credits through CAPE industry certifications which articulate for college credit, and meets the volunteer service work requirements.
- Allows a student who is eligible for a Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award to receive the award for a maximum of 100 percent of the number of credit hours or equivalent clock hours required to complete an applied technology diploma program, a technical degree education program, or a career certificate program at a Florida public or nonpublic education institution.
- Allows a Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholar who completes a technical degree education program to also receive a Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award for a bachelor of science degree program for which there is a statewide articulation agreement, or a bachelor of applied science degree program at a Florida College System institution.

The bill appropriates \$66,468 for 2016-2017 Florida Bright Futures Scholarships for additional home education program students who may become eligible for awards.

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

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

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Committee on Higher Education

HB 799 — Out-of-State Fee Waivers for Active Duty Servicemembers

by Reps. Avila, Sprowls, and others (SB 944 by Senators Richter and Gaetz)

The bill waives the out-of-state fee for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces who reside in or are stationed outside of Florida.

Additionally, similar to the Congressman C.W. “Bill” Young Veteran Tuition Waiver Program requirements, the bill requires:

- Tuition and fees charged to a student who qualifies for the out-of-state fee waiver for the specified active duty members of the United States Armed Forces must not exceed the tuition and fees charged to a resident student.
- Each state university, Florida College System institution, and technical center to report to the Board of Governors (BOG) and the State Board of Education (SBE), as applicable, the number and value of all fee waivers granted to the active duty members of the United States Armed Forces.
- The BOG and the SBE to adopt regulations and rules, respectively, to administer the out-of-state fee waivers for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 114-0

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Committee on Higher Education

CS/HB 1157 — Postsecondary Education for Veterans

by Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee; and Rep. Raburn and others (CS/SB 1638 by Appropriations Committee and Senator Lee)

The bill expands the mechanism through which eligible members of the United States Armed Forces can earn college credit for military experience. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Department of Education (department) to annually, identify and publish minimum scores, maximum credit, and course or courses for which college credit must be awarded for the specified tests:
 - Excelsior College subject examination.
 - Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) subject standardized test.
 - Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).
- Modifies the residency requirements for recipients of a Purple Heart or other combat decoration superior in precedence to qualify for a waiver from tuition for undergraduate college credit programs and career certificate programs if such recipients are currently or were at the time of the military action that resulted in the awarding of the combat decoration, residents of this state.
- Adds new methods for demonstrating mastery of subject area knowledge for educator certification purposes by allowing individuals to demonstrate subject area competency through documentation of:
 - Successful completion of a United States Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center program, or
 - A passing score on the DLPT.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 114-0

Committee on Higher Education

CS/HB 7019 — Education Access and Affordability

by Education Committee; Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee; and Reps. Porter and others (CS/SB 984 by Higher Education Committee and Senator Legg)

The bill modifies requirements related to higher education textbooks and instructional materials affordability and promotes public awareness on higher education costs.

Regarding textbook and instructional materials affordability, the bill expands textbook affordability provisions to include instructional materials and defines “instructional materials” as educational materials, in either printed or digital format, for use within a course.

The bill also specifies duties and responsibilities regarding textbook and instructional materials affordability for the Florida College System (FCS) institutions and state universities, FCS institution and state university boards of trustees, Chancellor of the FCS and the Chancellor of the State University System (SUS), and the State Board of Education (state board) and the Board of Governors for the State University System of Florida (BOG). Specifically, the bill:

- Requires each FCS institution and state university to post prominently in the course registration system and on its website, at least 45 days before the first day of class for each term, a hyperlink to lists of required and recommended textbooks and instructional materials for at least 95 percent of all courses and course sections offered at the institution during the upcoming term.
- Authorizes each board of trustees to adopt policies, in consultation with providers, including bookstores, which allow for the use of innovative pricing techniques and payment options for textbooks and instructional materials. Such techniques and options must include an opt-in provision for students and may be approved only if there is evidence that the options reduce the cost of textbooks and instructional materials for students.
- Requires each board of trustees to:
 - Examine each semester the cost of textbooks and instructional materials by course and course section for all general education course offerings to identify variance in the cost of textbooks and instructional materials among different sections of the same course and the percentage of textbooks and instructional materials that remain in use for more than one term; and specifies a July 1, 2018 deadline for repeal of such provisions.
 - Annually report, by September 30, to the Chancellor of the FCS or the Chancellor of the SUS, as applicable, specified information including, but not limited to, the textbook and instructional materials selection process for general education courses with a wide cost variance and specific institutional initiatives to reduce the cost of textbooks and instructional materials.
- Requires each chancellor to annually submit, by November 1, a summary of information provided by the institutions to the state board and the BOG, as applicable.
- Requires the state board and the BOG to receive input from students, faculty, bookstores, and publishers before adopting textbook and instructional materials affordability policies,

procedures, and guidelines to minimize the cost of textbooks and instructional materials to students; and modifies existing policies, procedures, and guidelines adopted by the state board and the BOG to include new issues addressing:

- The establishment of deadlines for instructors or departments to notify the college or university bookstore, as applicable, of the required and recommended textbooks and instructional materials so that the bookstore may verify availability, source explore lower cost options, explore alternatives with faculty when academically appropriate, and maximize the availability of used textbooks and instructional materials.
- Consultation with school districts to identify practices that impact the cost of dual enrollment textbooks and instructional materials to the school districts, including, but not limited to, the length of time that such textbooks and instructional materials remain in use.
- Selection of textbooks and instructional materials through cost-benefit analyses that help students obtain the highest quality product at the lowest available price by considering specified options (e.g., purchasing digital textbooks in bulk; providing rental options for textbook and instructional materials; developing mechanisms to assist in buying, renting, selling, and sharing textbooks and instructional materials; evaluation of cost savings to students if the students opt-in to participate in innovative pricing techniques and payment options for textbooks and instructional materials).

Regarding college affordability, the bill establishes provisions to:

- Require the BOG and the state board to:
 - Identify strategies and initiatives to promote college affordability by evaluating the impact of tuition and fees on students; federal, state, and institutional financial aid on the actual cost of attendance for students and their families; and the costs of textbooks and instructional materials.
 - Annually submit, by December 31, a report on their college affordability initiatives to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- Require each FCS institution and state university to publicly notice and notify all enrolled students of any proposal to increase tuition and fees at least 28 days before its consideration at a board of trustees meeting; and requires that the notice must:
 - Include the date and time of the meeting at which the proposal will be considered.
 - Specifically outline the details of existing tuition and fees, the rationale for the proposed increase, and how the funds from the proposed increase will be used.
 - Be posted on the institution's website and issued in a press release.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-0