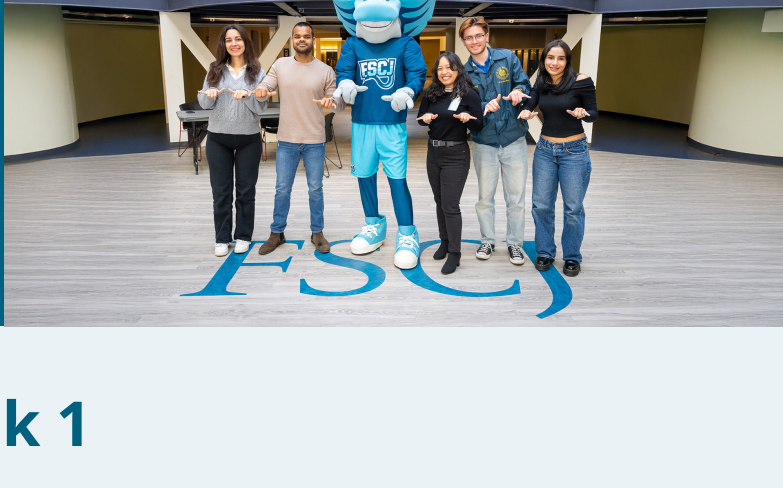


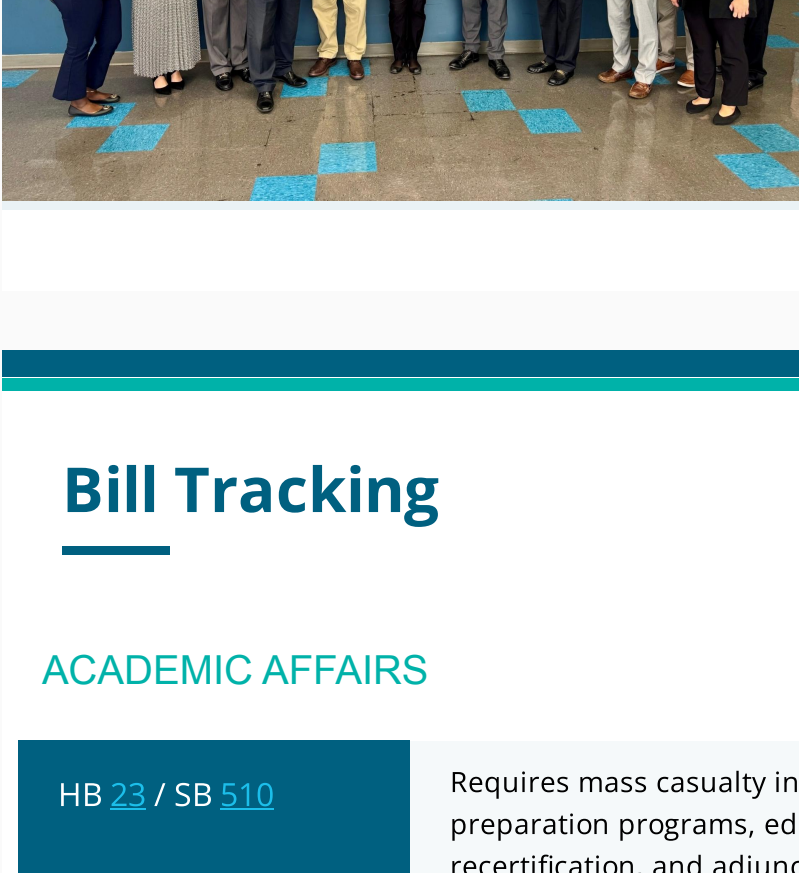
Legislative Update

January 16, 2026



Legislative Update - Week 1

The 2026 Legislative Session kicked off on Tuesday, January 13. The Florida Legislature will meet in session for the next 60 days, concluding their work on Friday, March 13. In that time, the Florida House of Representatives and Senate will be responsible for passing legislation as well as balanced budget, to be presented to the Governor.



Duval Delegation Luncheon

Since the end of the 2025 session, FSCJ has continued to meet with the legislators representing our area, referred to as the Duval Delegation. In October, Dr. Avendano and the District Board of Trustees welcomed the Duval Delegation to our Downtown Campus. During that visit, FSCJ was able to share the College's legislative priorities and take a tour of Cafe Frisch.

Bill Tracking



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

HB 23 / SB 310	Requires mass casualty incident training for teacher preparation programs; educator certification and recertification, and adjunct teaching certificate holders, and directs DOE to establish and maintain an approved list of trainings.	Assigned to committees.
HB 121 / SB 254	Strengthens nursing education program accountability by revising application and reporting requirements, imposing stricter standards for approval and compliance, and removing certain accreditation extensions.	Passed by House. Sent to Senate.
HB 221 / SB 1412	Establishes the On-the-Job Workforce Training Act, which allows participants in structured, work-based learning programs to be temporarily exempt from state minimum wage for up to nine months (or two full-time semesters totaling at least 15 credits each).	Assigned to committees.
HB 303 / SB 340	Requires professional and practical nursing education programs to include a 2-hour, board-approved course on human trafficking in the core curriculum, to be completed prior to graduation for students enrolling on or after July 1, 2027.	Assigned to committees.
HB 363	Expands access to oral health care by creating a licensure pathway for dental therapists, defining the scope of practice and oversight for dental therapy.	Passed by House Health Professions and Programs Subcommittee.
HB 627 / SB 190	Expands permissible instruction on race, gender, and LGBTQ topics while repealing former prohibitions on DEI programs and restoring support for diversity-based initiatives.	Assigned to committees.
SB 1048	Expands the definition of "credential" to include leadership and soft skills certificates offered by accredited educational organizations and recognized training entities.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1279 / SB 1052	Summary of Major Changes in Legislation Citizenship Requirements - Prohibit FCS and SUS institutions from admitting students who are not U.S. citizens or lawfully present in the U.S. - Limit adult general education eligibility to individuals who are U.S. citizens or lawfully present. - Require U.S. citizenship or lawful presence for eligibility for state financial aid and tuition assistance. Tuition Waivers/Exemptions - Tighten tuition exemption eligibility for homeless students by requiring physical presence in Florida and prior verification by a Florida public school. - Grant a tuition and fee waiver for active Florida State Guard members on a space-available basis. Financial Assistance Programs - Adjust Florida Gold Seal Scholars credit thresholds and allow GATE Program completers to apply for the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award. - Require GATE Program participants to complete 300 hours of volunteer service or paid work prior to enrollment. - Make technical corrections to Open Door Grant Program cross-references to align with updated residency and eligibility standards. Dual Enrollment - Clarify that dual enrollment is limited to Florida students. - Require GPA weighting based on actual high school credit earned and update fee exemption provisions for dual enrollment students. Accreditation - Revise prohibited expenditure statutes by removing discipline-specific accreditation costs from the list of restricted expenses. - Prohibit accreditors from penalizing institutions for complying with state law. Intercollegiate Athletics and Civil Rights Compliance - Eliminate statutory gender equity plan and evaluation requirements for intercollegiate athletics, while retaining enforcement tied to federal civil rights compliance. Funding and Fiscal Oversight - Revise the FCS funding formula to incorporate minimum funding per FTE, programmatic weighting, and regional cost differentials. - Raise the minimum carry-forward reserve requirement from 5% to 7%, with authority for institutions to maintain higher reserve.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1059 / SB 1062	Establishes the Florida Speech and Debate Education Act by designating the Florida Debate Initiative as the statewide speech and debate organization; creating Florida Speech and Debate Week and a Hall of Fame; requiring educator endorsements; directing development of postsecondary coursework, certificates, and dual-enrollment options in speech and debate; and appropriating recurring funds to support statewide programming.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1081 / SB 1266	Establishes the Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness Program within the Department of Commerce, offering internships, security clearance preparation, and CompTIA Security+ training through FCS and SUS.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1325 / SB 1246	Expands the LINE fund from nursing to include health science education programs; broadens eligible students and matching contributions (including non-healthcare partners); expands allowable uses of funds; updates evaluation and reporting requirements.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1129 / SB 1286	Expands first responder recruitment incentives and fire service grant programs and establishes a statewide Institute for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, creating partnership, training, and research opportunities for colleges with fire, EMS, public safety, and behavioral health programs.	Assigned to committees.
SB 1676	Expands and restructures advanced education funding by creating an Advanced Education Options Supplement; requires district school boards, eligible private schools, Florida College System institutions, and state universities to enter into dual enrollment articulation agreements; requires FCS institutions and state universities to allow eligible students to enroll in intermediate and advanced STEM dual enrollment courses if specified criteria are met; assigns weighted funding values and multipliers for dual enrollment, AP, IB, AICE, CAPE certifications, career-themed courses, pre apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, early college, and math and science olympiads; authorizes teacher bonuses and restrict allowable uses of funds; and imposes expanded reporting and accountability requirements.	Not yet assigned to committees.

COLLEGE OPERATIONS

SB 44	Requires state agencies, including FCS institutions, to provide an electronic payment option for public records fees.	Assigned to committees.
HB 437 / SB 770	As it relates to public records requests, the bills expand the definition of actual cost of duplication; impose new response requirements; restrict certain fees; mandate written justifications for delays/denials; strengthen penalties for public-records violations.	Assigned to committees.
HB 49	Establishes guidelines for permissible and prohibited political activities on public school grounds, including FCS institutions. Allows neutral forums, events, and student expression. Prohibits campaign signs, fundraising, partisan activity, and employee advocacy on work time.	Withdrawn prior to introduction.
HB 725 / SB 1736	Requires institutions to establish policies governing political activities on campus, ensure equal access for all candidates and political parties, obtain prior approval for political events, and prohibit the use of institutional property, email, media, or resources for campaigning. Restricts partisan voter registration drives and sets requirements for nonpartisan events, oversight processes, annual training, and post-election reporting.	Assigned to committees.
HB 77 / SB 176	Requires colleges to adopt and maintain written procedures to protect students, faculty, staff, and visitors from physical threats or conduct that could reasonably cause fear for their safety.	Passed by Senate Education Postsecondary Committee.
HB 391 / SB 534	Establishes a 1-year Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program at the three SUS and FCS institutions with the highest percentage of Pell-eligible students and requires those institutions to implement hunger-reduction activities, conduct a student hunger survey, and report results, while also directing OPPAGA to evaluate campus food insecurity and provide recommendations to the Legislature.	Passed by Senate Agriculture Committee.
HB 757 / SB 1896	Authorizes public postsecondary institutions to participate in the School Guardian Program; allowing certain students, faculty, and employees to carry weapons on campus under specified conditions; establishing new criminal offenses related to firearm discharge near schools; strengthening threat assessment, emergency response, mental health, and security risk assessment requirements; and requiring transfer of threat assessment records and promotion of a statewide suspicious activity reporting tool.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1471 / SB 1632	As it relates to the FCS, prohibits public colleges and universities from expending funds to advocate for domestic or foreign terrorist organizations or supporting related activities; prohibits awarding of certain scholarships, grants, or public financial aid to students who have promoted any designated terrorist organization; mandates immediate expulsion and the assessment of out-of-state fees for students who promote designated terrorist organizations, and disqualify them from fee waivers and institutional or state financial aid.	Not yet assigned to committees.
HB 1555	Requires Florida College System institutions and state universities to report deidentified, aggregated admissions data by race, ethnicity, and sex; prohibits mandatory training that endorses specified concepts; creates a private right of action with statutory damages for violations; and requires institutions to publish course, syllabus, and student organization information on publicly accessible websites.	Not yet assigned to committees.

FACILITIES

HB 63	Broadly disallows carrying handguns, weapons, or firearms in locations such as police stations, court facilities, educational institutions, and other prohibited places.	Withdrawn prior to introduction.
HB 113 / SB 1428	Requires designated roads on state university and Florida College System institution campuses to be renamed after Charlie James Kirk, with a funding penalty for noncompliance. This bill would require a portion of Broad St. on the FSCJ Downtown Campus to be renamed.	Assigned to committees.
HB 323 / SB 110	Requires local governments to refund or carry over unused parking fees on public property, restricts towing and citations for parked vehicles on public property, including FCS institutions, and prohibits private entities from charging parking fees on public property.	Assigned to committees.
HB 347 / SB 426	Restricts flag displays on government entity property to officially recognized flags such as the U.S. flag, state flags, local government flags, and tribally recognized or historically significant flags, with the U.S. flag required to be flown in the highest position. Bans flags that reference political partisanship, ideology, race, gender, or sexual orientation.	Assigned to committees.
HB 389 / HB 386	Broadens smoke-free regulations to include marijuana products and refine definitions of public places, smoking, and vaping to prohibit marijuana use in specified areas, including schools and campuses.	Assigned to committees.

HUMAN RESOURCES

HB 139 / SB 312	Prohibits state agencies, including FCS institutions, or independent contractors from retaliating against employees who disclose ethics violations and specify procedures for delivering related complaint documents.	Passed by Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability & Senate Ethics and Elections Committees.
HB 145 / SB 1366	Increases statutory liability limits for tort claims against governmental entities, including FCS institutions, streamlines claim procedures, and adjusts statutes of limitation and insurance provisions while creating new exceptions for specific victims.	Passed by Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability & Senate Ethics and Elections Committees.
HB 147 / SB 130	Establish a required oath for all instructional and administrative employees at FCS and SUS institutions, affirming support for the U.S. and Florida Constitutions and commitment to professional, independent, and nonpartisan conduct. *As for K-12 teachers.	Assigned to committees.
SB 136	Extends employment protections for public employees who legally use medical marijuana, ensure due process in drug testing, and require reasonable workplace accommodations.	Assigned to committees.
HB 641 / SB 1642	Prohibits public employers from requiring pronoun use or trainings that conflict with an employee's beliefs; limit job forms to male/female options, bar adverse personnel actions based on stated views about gender ideology, and prohibit state-funded entities from mandating any training related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.	Assigned to committees.
HB 977 / SB 1070	Requires the Department of Management Services to provide coverage for evidence-based obesity treatment and management in the state group health insurance plan.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1403 / SB 1018	Authorizes public employers to implement automatic enrollment arrangements in deferred compensation plans, including default contribution rates, default investments, and periodic reenrollment, while preserving employee opt-out rights.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1441 / SB 1410	Requires employer contribution rates for optional retirement programs in the State University System and Florida College System to align with the employer contribution rates under the Florida Retirement System.	Assigned to committees.
SB 1528	Authorizes Florida Retirement System members to voluntarily transfer years of creditable service to another employee within the same retirement classification, subject to actuarial liability and irrevocability provisions.	Not yet assigned to committees.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

HB 235 / SB 252	Prohibits discrimination based on protected hairstyle in K-20 public education system & specified private schools.	Assigned to committees.
HB 415 / SB 486	Requires colleges to designate a Title VI coordinator to oversee compliance, provide training, maintain complaint records, and advise on corrective actions, and allow students or parents to file Title VI discrimination complaints with the coordinator or dean of students.	Assigned to committees.
HB 533 / SB 562	Establishes a Communication Bill of Rights requiring educational institutions, state agencies, and health care providers to support individuals with disabilities in using their preferred alternative communication methods.	Assigned to committees.
HB 763	Revises postsecondary education services and supports for youth formerly in foster care by extending eligibility through age 26, clarifying full-time and part-time enrollment requirements, strengthening renewal and reinstatement criteria, expanding aftercare services, and establishing detailed postsecondary outcome and accountability metrics for program oversight.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1025 / SB 730	Requires all public and private K-20 institutions to establish, maintain, and clearly communicate written sexual violence policies and available supportive measures to students, parents, staff, and volunteers.	Assigned to committees.

STUDENT TUITION, FEES & RESIDENCY

HB 19	Expands the Educational Dollars for Duty program by providing partial tuition assistance to spouses and children of active Florida National Guard members.	Withdrawn prior to introduction to committees.
HB 307 / SB 372	Expands tuition and fee waivers to apply to employees of sheriff's offices at state universities and Florida College System institutions. Requires that sheriff's office employees, with approval from the sheriff, receive tuition and fee waivers for up to 6 credit hours per term on a space-available basis.	Assigned to committees.
SB 720	Prohibits the loss of resident status for tuition purposes solely due to incarceration.	Passed by Senate Education Postsecondary Committee.
HB 721 / SB 1276	Limits the enrollment of foreign students without permanent U.S. residency to a maximum of 10 percent of all students at public postsecondary schools.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1273 / SB 882	Expands the required out-of-state fee waiver to include students who are undocumented for federal immigration purposes.	Assigned to committees.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SB 146	Requires the Florida Digital Service to conduct a study that addresses the impact of state agencies procuring, implementing, or operating artificial intelligence powered technology.	Assigned to committees.
HB 1395 / SB 482	Regulates the use of AI by governmental entities and private actors by restricting contracts with AI vendors tied to foreign countries of concern, requiring vendor affidavits, establishing an Artificial Intelligence Bill of Rights, imposing consumer protections related to bots, chatbots, and deidentified data, and prohibiting unauthorized AI-generated use of an individual's name, image, or likeness.	Assigned to committees.
HB 899 / SB 1458	Creates a task force to study the opportunities, risks, and best practices associated with the use of artificial intelligence in academic instruction, research, and student conduct across the SUS and FCS.	Assigned to committees.

We'd love your feedback!

On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with the new design and content of this newsletter?

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If you have any questions or comments about bills being tracked or other matters not included in the update, please feel free to contact [Taylor Mejia Roberts, Director of Government and Community Relations](#).



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