

## **The 2012 Legislative Session: Week Three**

1. **Are privatized on-line courses the wave of the future?** Both chambers are touting the benefits of on-line courses as a way to achieve dramatic reductions in university and college budgets in the future. Legislative leaders actually say that we can create on-line courses once and then use them repeatedly to collect tuition and avoid instruction costs in the future. They are slow to acknowledge the expenses of revising on-line courses each year to reflect changes in research results, and in texts and materials available to students, as well as the expenses of remaining in constant contact with students in answering questions and evaluating their work. If these factors are acknowledged, it cancels out cost savings.

If we ignore these considerations, the academic quality of the offerings will be sacrificed. Such on-line offerings are not real academic courses that serve student needs. If legislators adopt this on-the-cheap model of distance education, we can expect a nightmare.

**What will the nightmare be like? A clue can be found at the end of the House higher education budget. There is \$2.5 million allocated (“student access pilot project”) to Western Governors University, a private entity without classrooms (charging \$6000 per year), which is designated by all Western states as an on-line university with credits acceptable in public higher education institutions in those states. In other words, credits for a baccalaureate degree can come from a private company with no actual faculty interacting with and evaluating students in meaningful ways.**

I have spoken with faculty from these states in meetings of our affiliates (AFT and NEA), as well as in meetings of the national Campaign for the Future of Higher Education. They testify to the loss of quality in this approach in which universities and colleges accept credits toward a degree from a private “higher education institution” (without an authentic faculty) that pretends to serve legitimate academic needs.

**In Florida, this camel just stuck its nose under the edge of our tent. Unless faculty contact their senators now, we can expect the same result in our future.**

2. **What kind of higher education budget are we facing?** The House released a budget this week. (The Senate budget has not been published.) The approach is to cut appropriations and expect tuition increases to make up the differences in funding lost.
3. **Should Florida deny faculty and professional employees the right to serve in the legislature?** In SB 1560 Senators John Thrasher and Don Gaetz propose taking away from faculty the right to serve in the Legislature -- claiming it is a conflict of interest for faculty to vote on bills that favor their own institution. (The bill is silent on possible conflicts by bankers, insurance executives, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and other professionals who often chair committees that craft legislation, and regardless of their possible conflicts of interest, sometimes even use their expertise to prevent damaging mistakes from becoming law.) **University and college employees will join convicted felons as the only Floridians barred from serving in the Legislature.**

If you accept silencing faculty in the legislative process, this is the time to be silent. **If you object, now is the time to ask a senator to vote No when it comes to the floor.**

4. **Please call their capital and district offices.** We are only contacting senators because that is where we have a chance to stop destructive bills. Click on this link and enter your zip code to find your senator. Their contact information is in the attached file. <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/Find>
5. **What kind of message can faculty give to make a difference?** Say your name and state that you live in the district. State that you want in leave a message for your senator to

**Vote against SB 1560**

**Vote against more cuts in higher education.**

It is the volume of calls (not the quality of an explanation) that makes the difference. Politeness counts. It takes 30 seconds. (Emails are not read or in some cases blocked.)

**Important: Do not use university or college equipment to call legislators or to forward messages to other faculty. Use a private phone or computer.**

Tom Auxter, President

# Florida Senate 2012

| Last Name           | First Name           | Party | District | District Phone | Capital Phone  |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| Alexander           | JD                   | Rep   | 17       | (863) 679-4847 | (850) 487-5044 |
| Altman              | Thad                 | Rep   | 24       | (321) 752-3138 | (850) 487-5053 |
| Benacquisto         | Lizabeth             | Rep   | 27       | (561) 753-2440 | (850) 487-5356 |
| Bennett             | Michael S. "Mike"    | Rep   | 21       | (941) 727-6349 | (850) 487-5078 |
| Bogdanoff           | Ellyn Setnor         | Rep   | 25       | (954) 467-4205 | (850) 487-5100 |
| Braynon             | Oscar                | Dem   | 33       | (305) 654-7150 | (850) 487-5116 |
| Bullard (L)         | Larcenia J.          | Dem   | 39       | (305) 668-7344 | (850) 487-5127 |
| Dean                | Charles S. "Charlie" | Rep   | 3        | (352) 860-5175 | (850) 487-5017 |
| Detert              | Nancy                | Rep   | 23       | (941) 480-3547 | (850) 487-5081 |
| Diaz de la Portilla | Miguel               | Rep   | 36       | (305) 643-7200 | (850) 487-5109 |
| Dockery             | Paula                | Rep   | 15       | (863) 413-2900 | (850) 487-5040 |
| Evers               | Greg                 | Rep   | 2        | (850) 689-0556 | (850) 487-5000 |
| Fasano              | Mike                 | Rep   | 11       | (727) 848-5885 | (850) 487-5062 |
| Flores              | Anitere              | Rep   | 38       | (305) 270-6550 | (850) 487-5130 |
| Gaetz (D)           | Don                  | Rep   | 4        | (850) 897-5747 | (850) 487-5009 |
| Garcia (R)          | Rene                 | Rep   | 40       | (305) 364-3100 | (850) 487-5106 |
| Gardiner            | Andy                 | Rep   | 9        | (407) 428-5800 | (850) 487-5047 |
| Gibson              | Audrey               | Dem   | 1        | (904) 359-2553 | (850) 487-5024 |
| Haridopolos         | Mike                 | Rep   | 26       | (321) 752-3131 | (850) 487-5056 |
| Hays                | Alan                 | Rep   | 20       | (352) 742-6441 | (850) 487-5014 |
| Jones (D)           | Dennis               | Rep   | 13       | (727) 549-6411 | (850) 487-5065 |
| Joyner              | Arthenia             | Dem   | 18       | (813) 233-4277 | (850) 487-5059 |
| Latvala             | Jack                 | Rep   | 16       | (727) 556-6500 | (850) 487-5075 |
| Lynn                | Evelyn J.            | Rep   | 7        | (386) 238-3180 | (850) 487-5033 |
| Margolis            | Gwen                 | Dem   | 35       | (305) 571-5777 | (850) 487-5121 |
| Montford            | Bill                 | Dem   | 6        | (850) 653-2656 | (850) 487-5004 |
| Negron              | Joe                  | Rep   | 28       | (772) 219-1665 | (850) 487-5088 |
| Norman              | Jim                  | Rep   | 12       | (813) 265-6260 | (850) 487-5068 |
| Oelrich             | Steve                | Rep   | 14       | (352) 375-3555 | (850) 487-5020 |
| Rich                | Nan                  | Dem   | 34       | (954) 747-7933 | (850) 487-5103 |
| Richter             | Garrett              | Rep   | 37       | (239) 417-6205 | (850) 487-5124 |
| Ring                | Jeremy               | Dem   | 32       | (954) 917-1392 | (850) 487-5094 |
| Sachs               | Maria Lorts          | Dem   | 30       | (561) 279-1427 | (850) 487-5091 |
| Simmons             | David                | Rep   | 22       | (407) 262-7578 | (850) 487-5050 |
| Siplin              | Gary                 | Dem   | 19       | (407) 297-2071 | (850) 487-5190 |
| Smith (C)           | Christopher "Chris"  | Dem   | 29       | (561) 650-6801 | (850) 487-5112 |
| Sobel               | Eleanor              | Dem   | 31       | (954) 924-3693 | (850) 487-5097 |
| Storms              | Ronda                | Rep   | 10       | (813) 651-2189 | (850) 487-5072 |
| Thrasher            | John                 | Rep   | 8        | (904) 727-3600 | (850) 487-5030 |
| Wise                | Stephen R.           | Rep   | 5        | (904) 381-6000 | (850) 487-5027 |