



Week One- January 17, 2020 Happy New Year!

The new decade has begun and so has the 2020 legislative session. Only 56 (out of 60) days to go! ☺

The 2020 session kicked off full of action as the legislature works to develop the state budget while contending with a diverse set of issues such as: transportation, guns, environment, criminal justice, education, health care, and immigration.

Opening day, Senate President Bill Galvano addressed the Senate chamber welcoming members back and reminding them to “put aside personalities and politics for good policy.” House Speaker Oliva opened his final session outlining his agenda to continue transforming healthcare and education policy with attention in higher education expenditures. Governor DeSantis delivered his second State of the State address, formally starting the 2020 legislative session with a quick look back at his first year and his “new wish list”, which includes continued funding for water resources, increasing base teacher salaries and attention to immigration issues.

Tuesday, UF/IFAS had the last two of our appropriations requests pass the House Higher Education Appropriations subcommittee, successfully passing their first hurdle. The others were heard in the committee weeks prior to the regular session.

Our Legislative Priorities for the 2020 Session include:

- Workload at \$3,882,213 Recurring submitted by Florida Board of Governors
- Algal Bloom Research & Mitigation at \$1,754,000
 - Sponsors: Senator Gruters and Representative Eagle
- Demonstration of Reducing Residential Water Quality Impacts at \$920,000
 - Sponsors: Senator Harrell and Representative Caruso
- Florida 4-H Education Center Improvements at \$1,625,000
 - Sponsors: Senator Albritton and Representative Tomkow

Also, we are closely watching many policy bills related to education, water, forestry, hemp, and climate resiliency.

The House Higher Education Appropriations subcommittee met a second time to discuss a base budget review exercise. The goal of the subcommittee was to find \$295 million in the higher education budget to reprioritize (eliminate, reduce or increase funding of existing programs and fund a different program with a higher priority). The results are not final, but will be taken into consideration during the development of the budget.

The subcommittee identified \$371 million, but fortunately no UF/IFAS specific appropriations, which puts us in a good position in the beginning of the budget development process.

The committee will soon be working to put their recommended budget together where we will be keeping a close watch on five of the UF/IFAS recurring base projects in addition to our priorities.



January 24, 2020

Week 2- It's been a fast and furious week here in Tallahassee.

The legislative budget process is on time and moving fast. Senate Appropriations Chair Rob Bradley laid out the schedule for this year's budget process as well as guidelines for amending the budget bills.

The Senate and House will file their proposed budgets next Friday, Jan 31st, which will be heard in the full Appropriations Committees the following week.

Based on that schedule, legislators are beginning the discussions and negotiations to create the budget proposals. We expect the Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs' proposed budgets to be released and heard in their respective committees next week.

The Senate and House budget bills are based on the combination of the subcommittee chairs' budgets for each funding silo. It is also the first chance to see where our budget items stand.

The Senate Appropriations committee also heard the Governor's Recommended Budget. (The House heard these recommendations last week.) There were many questions related to the proposed funding for education, the increase for teachers' salaries, environment, water quality and criminal justice in the governor's recommended budget.

Heartfelt thanks for grassroots support goes out to a number of stakeholder groups who were in town this week. Members of the Florida Cattlemen's Associations took their boots to the hill and included support for IFAS funding in their legislative priorities. The Florida Forestry Association and the Florida Mosquito Control Association were also in town and served as true advocates on UF/IFAS behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Ann Hooks'.

Mary Ann Hooks, Director of UF/IFAS Governmental Affairs



FYIFAS Week 3- January 30,2020

It's been a wild and crazy week filled with budget roll outs, stakeholder visits and Florida 4-H Day at the Capitol.

The House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees released the first draft of their budget proposals.

The Senate Education Subcommittee proposed a system increase of \$80 million for the Board of Governor's Pillars of Excellence. In the Senate Education budget, UF/IFAS received partial funding for two projects; \$250,000 for 4-H Education (\$1,625,000 request) and \$250,000 for Reducing Residential Water Quality Impacts (920,000 request).

In contrast, the House Higher Education Budget proposed a decrease in the state university system budget of \$28.9 million dollars, 0.56%. The House Higher Education Budget proposed only \$100,000 for the Algal bloom Research & Mitigation (\$1,750,000 request). There was no funding included for the UF/IFAS priority request for Workload in the House or Senate proposals. There is still an opportunity to get the funds included in the budget between now and the end of the conference process.

The House Ag & Natural Resources budget proposed to eliminate funding for the UF/IFAS's Quarantine Facility in Ft. Pierce, the LakeWatch Program and Invasive Exotic Plants research, but the Senate Agriculture budget maintains this funding. At this point, all of the UF/IFAS budget requests, except Workload, are in at least one of the budget proposals, making them eligible to be a part of the budget conference negotiations.

Next week, the House and Senate appropriations committees are expected to hear their budget bills, which will consist of the subcommittees recommended budgets combined.

This week, we also welcomed the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association Emerging Leaders group and Wedgworth Leadership Group to Tallahassee. Wedgworth Leadership seminar was full of great visits with legislators, cabinet members, stakeholders and a House chamber tour. University trustees and leadership also were in Tallahassee for the Florida Board of Governor's Meeting.

The Leon County Florida 4-H members presented in the Senate Agriculture Committee as a lead to Florida 4-H Day at the Capitol, which was Thursday. A HUGE thank you to all those 4-H youth and volunteers who participated in "4-H Day at the Capitol" covering the capitol in Green and meeting with legislators. The 4-H youth made a presentation to Governor DeSantis Staff, which was well received. We also want to send our gratitude to the stakeholders and alumni who supported 4-H and the Foundation Board for a great Alumni and Friends reception.

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FYIFAS Week 4, February 7, 2020

It's Budget Time!

The Senate and House have released their budgets completing one of the first steps in preparation for hammering out a final budget before the legislative session is scheduled to end March 13.

The Senate proposed a \$92.8 billion budget while the House proposed a \$91.3 billion budget.

The bills are apart by a \$1.5 billion spread as well as differences in funding amounts for education, health care, teachers salaries, criminal justice, transportation and the environment.

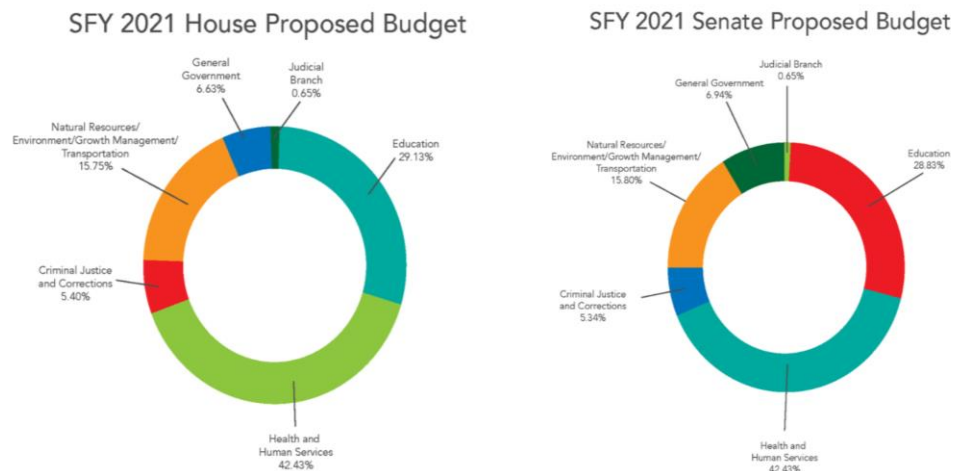
Working out the differences in the two bills will prove to be a difficult job for budget negotiators.

We are expecting the Senate and House to take up the budget bills for a vote next week. Shortly after the bills pass through their respective chambers, a budget conference committee will be appointed

by leadership to negotiate the budget issues. During negotiations, legislators will trade offers on specific line-items and language until they agree on the exact same budget.

In addition to the budget, many policy bills of importance to the legislative leadership moved through the lawmaking process, posturing for a floor vote and passage.

This week, at the request of the chairman, UF/IFAS Agronomy Department Chair, Diane Rowland made a presentation to the Senate Committee on Agriculture on the topic of “Carbon Farming: What, Why, Where, How, What Next?” [You can watch her presentation here- 27:16 minute mark.](#)



Mary Ann Hooks, Director of UF/IFAS Governmental Affairs



FYIFAS Week 5, February 13, 2020-

It's Hump Week! We're halfway there...

Wednesday marked the midpoint of this legislative session and with just four weeks left, the heat is on for all involved to secure passage of priority legislation, defeat legislation they oppose and most importantly, pass a budget.

Thursday, the House positioned its proposed \$91.37 billion budget for a final vote, as did the Senate with a \$92.83 billion proposal. The current year budget is \$90.98 billion.

With a nearly \$1.5 billion gap between the two budget bills, the budget conferees will have a significant challenge to work out the numerous issues.

Among key issues during negotiations will be the House's proposal to reprioritize affordable housing money in the budget; how much money for Florida Forever land-preservation program; differences on pay raises for state employees; and the tourism-marketing agency- Visit Florida.

Both Chambers had the opportunity on the floor to ask questions of the appropriations sub-committee chairs followed by lengthy debate of the budgets.

Now that both houses have passed their proposed budgets, the appropriations chairs and legislative leadership will begin the process of appointing a conference committee to work through differences in the budgets. It is almost like starting over. Just as they did before building their respective budget proposals, now the House and Senate have to agree on how much money to provide for each section or silo of the budget. Negotiations over the allocations could drag out over the next two weeks or be out as early as next week. Shortly before or after allocations are determined, the conference committee will be appointed.

On Tuesday, February 18, we are looking forward to having various students, deans, trustees, researchers, faculty and staff in town for Gator Day. If you find yourself in [Tallahassee for Gator Day](#), come see and taste the future of Florida citrus with UF/IFAS on the plaza level of the capitol 9am-3pm! If you can't join us in person, be sure to wear your orange and blue and engage with us on social media with #GatorDay.

Twitter- @IFASgovaffairs @gatoradvocates

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UFIFASGovernmentalAffairs/> and <https://www.facebook.com/GatorsforHigherEd/>

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FYIFAS Week 6, February 20, 2020 - Three more weeks to go!

We are in a waiting pattern on the budget so the legislature stayed busy this week focusing on policy. The House and Senate covered a lot of ground during multiple sessions, addressing a long list of policies including hot button issues with long debates. At this point, we are waiting to hear when leadership has agreed to the new allocations of funding to the budget silos like education, transportation, etc., so the budget conference process can begin.

On Tuesday, we were pleased to have various UF faculty, staff, students, trustees, and alumni flood the halls of the capitol to promote UF and celebrate Gator Day. It was the most successful one yet. UF/IFAS was well represented. We had staff here educating legislators, legislative staff and the public through demonstrations of what we do and some of our accomplishments.

We had an experience booth highlighting technology innovations, advances related to citrus and precision agriculture. We showcased technology for disease detection, provided samples to the public of new varieties of citrus that are tolerant to citrus greening as well as precision agriculture demonstrations with drones and a rover.

Dr. Kati Migliaccio made a great presentation on precision agriculture to the Senate Ag Committee. Her presentation helped legislators better understand what precision agriculture is and provided highlights of UF/IFAS research using artificial intelligence, drones, robots and more. Dr. Michael Rogers attended and helped field questions. He also visited with legislators to inform them of the latest advances in citrus research.

This year, we also partnered with Magnolia Strategies and AgriStarts, who donated over 250 small blackberry starter plants to hand out to the public to promote UF/IFAS partnership with Florida growers and companies to create new varieties of plants.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all who participated in Gator day and particularly those from UF/IFAS's Citrus Research Education Center, Agricultural Biological Engineering Department, Water and Soil Sciences Department, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Ambassadors, Leon County Extension, Office of Research and Senior Vice President's office.

Missed Gator Day? Check out these two stories highlighting the day and catch some great photos on social media : [University of Florida researchers aim to combat citrus-greening](#) and [UF/IFAS highlights precision agriculture during Gator Day at the Capitol](#). Twitter- @IFASgovaffairs @gatoradvocates Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UFIFASGovernmentalAffairs/> and <https://www.facebook.com/GatorsforHigherEd/>

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FYIFAS Week 7 February 27, 2020

Only 15 more days...

The Legislative Session is nearing the end. Early next week, committees stop meeting to hear bills so the time to get bills in the proper posture to be heard and potentially passed is slipping away. It's crunch time.

Many of the policy bills that were passed this week move us closer to legislative leadership deciding on budget allocations.

The budget conference process is imminent with the promise of sleepless nights and tense days (*requiring lots of chocolate and french fries*).

Senate Appropriations Chairman Rob Bradley offered little detail on budget talks with the House but said "We're in good shape in week seven (of the 60-day session), and I'm confident that we're going to resolve (the budget) either on time or very near that."

Legislative session is scheduled to end March 13, with the budget needing to be completed by March 10 because of a 72-hour "cooling off" period.

With a \$1.5 billion gap between the two bills, budget conferees will have a difficult job to work out differences on big-ticket issues.

We have a heavy lift ahead of us to bring the IFAS budget items up to where we need them. We are working to get our Workload funded (which increases our base) as well as saving existing programs the House has proposed to cut. We are also still working to get funding for Florida 4-H Education Center Improvements, Algal Bloom Research & Mitigation, as well as Demonstration for Reducing Residential Water Quality Impacts, which address nutrients in storm water runoff.

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FYIFAS Week 8 March 5, 2020

Sine die (from the [Latin](#) "without day") means "without assigning a day for a further meeting or hearing". To [adjourn](#). - In other words, the end of the legislative session.

Typically, week 8 of 9 is the time to start making deals to move all those bills that are still sitting on hold. At this point, all of our budget issues remain the same as last week, and nothing can change until the budget conference begins.

However, this week legislative leaders have made it clear that the legislative session will have to be extended and Sine Die will not happen on Friday the 13th as scheduled- No light at the end of the tunnel, at least not yet.

House Appropriations Chair Travis Cummings said, "No agreements have occurred in the areas. Without allocations, we cannot begin the budget conference. There is still time, but every day is crucial at this point."

Senate Budget Chair Rob Bradley said, "We're making real progress with our friends in the House ..."

House Speaker José Oliva, told his members "It is now inevitable that we will go long in session," Oliva said. "The extent of that extension is yet unknown, but we are confident we're working closely with our partners in the Senate to bridge the gaps between us that can get us into allocations and then into the budget conference."

Time is running short and major issues remain unresolved including contentious issues like Visit Florida, an agency with a budget of over \$26 million, which the House wants to cut entirely. The two chambers are over \$100 million apart on the budget to acquire environmentally sensitive lands, they are over \$243 million apart on affordable housing and \$150 million apart on pay raises for teachers.

Other issues noted by leadership as part of the discussions related to budget allocation negotiations include criminal justice reform, Agency for Persons with Disabilities funding, Clean Water Act, Gaming, EVerify, hospital funding and more.

Coronavirus has dominated national and state attention this week. The Appropriations Committee Chairmen noted they are taking into account funding for the Coronavirus response.

Senate President Galvano anticipates appropriating an additional \$10-\$20 million for public health, yet another issue to be negotiated.

There are many unanswered questions and negotiations are ongoing. Rumors abound and projections of when the budget conference will begin and the legislative session will end are anybody's guess at this point.

Things are subject to change... at any minute... multiple times. Stay tuned...

Mary Ann Hooks, Director UF/IFAS Governmental Affairs



FYIFAS BUDGET CONFERENCE- March 16, 2020
Best session ever!....well in a long time anyway.

Budget conference negotiations began last weekend and continued throughout the week, finishing on Saturday. It was the traditional IFAS rollercoaster as we were down, then up, then down and then up in a really big way.

Last Monday, the chairs of Higher Education Appropriations met for the last time and the House offered \$1,138,224 for Workload - remember we started with \$0 funding for Workload. The remaining unresolved issues were bumped up to the full Appropriation chairs, Senator Bradley and Representative Cummings.

Conference was delayed as the struggle to make sure money was available to offset the projected economic impacts of the Coronavirus was added to the outstanding issues such as the tax package and teachers' pay. While waiting for the conference to resume, we worked all week to get our numbers increased.

The late nights and lost weekend paid off late Friday night when the budget conference met at 12:05 am and the House offered a total of \$2,586,078 for Workload (\$861,078 recurring and \$1,725,000 nonrecurring) with the Senate accepting the offer. As good as that is, it gets even better!

Saturday afternoon, during the final Conference Committee meeting, an additional \$1,213,922 recurring funds were added to Workload bringing us in for a FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF \$3.8 MILLION (\$2,075,000 recurring and \$1,725,000 nonrecurring). I know - we couldn't believe it either.

But that's not all! A bill that regulates, conforms, adds and deletes under-performing specialty license plates has been in the works for a few years. This year, we were thrilled to get a Florida 4-H tag included in the bill.

Last but not least, to our great relief the House accepted the Senate position to maintain full funding for the Quarantine Facility at \$540,000 and Lake Watch at \$500,000.

Some other big wins for UF included receiving \$25 million for Operational Support, \$35 million for the Data Science Building and \$8.3 Million for UF's - P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School.

Some of the top budget issues agreed to in the **\$93.2 billion budget** included teachers pay, Visit Florida funding for three years; \$100 million for Florida Forever and \$650 million Everglades and Water restoration projects, and \$300 Million to help fight the coronavirus as well as provide for resulting economic losses.

With the required 72-hour cooling-off period, the Legislature agreed to extend session to vote on the budget and Sine Die on Thursday, March 20th. We are expecting no changes to the bill as agreed to but will watch until the ink dries on the page to make sure. The next stop is the Governor's desk for signature and vetoes.

There is no way to adequately say thank you to all of you who supported us this year. It's taken several years to reach this goal and we could not have made it without you. I won't begin to name names as there are too many and I would risk leaving someone out but you know who you are...a thousand thank yous!