



## CS/HB 7051 Higher Education

- Transparency and accountability are two principles required to maintain the public's trust. Currently, there are some controls in place to ensure that institutions are accountable and responsible stewards of state funds, but there are several areas that need strengthening.
- **CS/HB 7051** gives the Chief Financial Officer, Senate president, Speaker of the House, or board members opportunities to investigate allegations of waste, fraud or financial mismanagement by a state university or its board of trustees.
- The bill increases oversight over state higher education institutions to ensure they are acting in accordance with state law.
- The bill requires the Board of Governors (BOG) to develop and annually deliver a training program for trustees.
- The bill requires public access to records relating to state university DSOs, including auditors reports, management letters, any information necessary for auditor's reports, any information related to the expenditure of funds, and any supplemental data requested by the BOG, university board of trustees, the Auditor General, and OPPAGA.
- The bill strengthens oversight of Florida College System (FCS) DSOs by requiring each board to establish thresholds for approval of purchases, acquisitions, projects, and issuance of debt.
- The bill prohibits FCS institution boards of trustees from:
  - Transferring state appropriations to any DSO with a fund balance of greater than \$50 million, unless such funds are pledged for capital projects.
  - Authorizing the use of state funds for travel expenses by any FCS institution DSO.
- The bill deletes an exemption to the prohibition against the giving of any gift, either directly or indirectly, to a political committee by a FCS institution DSO.
- The bill revises FCS institution DSO requirements relating to personal services.
- The bill requires all FCS institutions to report annually to the Legislature the amount of state appropriations transferred to any DSO during the previous fiscal year, the purpose for which the funds were transferred, and the remaining balance of any funds transferred.
- The bill requires a university's annual capital outlay budget be consistent with its most recent 5-year capital improvement plans and plans include anticipated funding sources for all projects in all years.
- The BOG must be provided notice and an opportunity to review campus master plans. The BOG also has the authority to approve those elements of the master plan required by BOG regulation and the capital improvements element of the master plan.