

*Dear Friend of USF,*

*Today is Day 36 of the 60-day legislative session. At the end of last week, the House and Senate each amended, debated and passed differing versions of a proposed state budget for fiscal year 2011-2012. The special negotiation process that is designed to agree upon a single state spending plan that both chambers can support, referred to in Tallahassee lingo as the "Budget Conference," is expected to begin later this week.*

*There has been little change in overall higher education spending plans since the last newsletter, with the Senate proposing to spend roughly a quarter of a billion dollars more on post secondary education issues next year. The most significant portion of that difference is in total proposed spending to support state universities. We are hopeful that the leaders of each chamber will agree upon a higher education "allocation" of funds closer to the Senate's proposed spending level, at which time individual issues will be negotiated within that total spending cap. Your continued advocacy for increased funding support for Florida's state universities, and especially for the USF System, is much appreciated during this critical time.*

*Included in this issue (see Bills in Brief) are summaries of each chamber's proposed higher education budget conforming bill. These bills provide changes to the law that are generally designed to implement specific spending decisions contained in the state budget. Oftentimes, these budget conforming bills are the vehicles that contain the major policy changes passed each session.*

*For example, the Senate's proposed budget conforming bill (SB 2150) proposes to suspend the state matching gift programs. These programs have been very successful at USF; our donors appreciate*

