

# *Legislative* UPDATE

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*Current News About Legislative Issues Affecting The University of Alabama System*

## **GOVERNOR RILEY SIGNS EDUCATION BUDGET**

Governor Bob Riley returned the FY 2004-05 Education Trust Fund budget to the Legislature today with an Executive Amendment clarifying the repayment of funds to the Capital Improvement Trust Fund. Both the House and Senate unanimously concurred with the amended budget, marking the final step in the process.

Although the new budget does not adequately address many financial concerns (including salary needs) facing our three campuses, it is a reasonable budget for higher education in light of economic realities. It is important to remember that Alabama is one few states in the nation that successfully increased appropriations to higher education for the coming year. The Board of Trustees and our System and campus leadership remain fully committed to improving faculty and staff salaries in 2004-05.

The UA System leadership has already begun discussions with key administration officials and legislative leaders on the FY 05-06 education budget. We appreciate the public commitments of Senate Finance and Taxation-Education Fund Chair Hank Sanders (D-Selma) and House Education Finance and Appropriations Chair Richard Lindsey (D-Centre) to make next year the “year of higher education” in the budget process. We will be working closely with them to address funding problems facing our campuses.

## **LEGISLATURE TAKES TEN-DAY BREAK TO STUDY REMAINING PRIORITIES**

The Legislature will not meet next week so staff and members can thoroughly review pending legislation and identify bills that must be passed before adjournment on May 17. The next edition of the Legislative Update will be published after the session ends with a summary of pertinent Legislative actions.

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