Florida Set for New Cuts In Spending on Colleges

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closing of certain programs.

Under the Senate budget proposal, Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton stands to lose $47 million, one-third of the financing it receives from the state.

“The passage of the proposed budget cuts to Florida Atlantic University would have a devastating effect on the future of F.A.U.,” said Mary Jane Saunders, the university’s president.

“F.A.U. provides a $4 billion economic impact to its six-county service region, and those cuts would be shattering to all we serve.”

Dr. Padrón, whose college serves some of the state’s poorest students and who says he raises tuition as a last resort, agreed. “If we have budget cuts and we don’t have the opportunity to raise tuition, we are going to be in crisis mode,” he said.

For some universities, the situation is dire. The University of South Florida in Tampa stands to lose a crippling 58 percent of its financing under the Senate bill. It was singled out as the result of a fight with Senator JD Alexander, chairman of the Budget Committee, over the university’s unwillingness to sever ties with its Lakeland branch.

Mr. Alexander, who is serving out his final year in the Senate because of term limits, has pushed for independence for the Lakeland campus, the University of South Florida Polytechnic, which has 4,400 students. He wants to make it the state’s 12th university, but the University of South Florida opposes the idea.

A flood of e-mails, calls and appearances at the Capitol last week by University of South Florida students and faculty members led to some relief: Senate budget writers freed up $25 million for the university.

Mr. Alexander said the cuts were calculated according to each school’s reserve fund. The University of South Florida said it did not have the most reserve funds, yet it drew the largest cut. The university will also lose out because it must absorb $25 million in costs associated with the effort to close the Lakeland campus.

The budget bill still includes language for turning the Lakeland campus into the state’s 12th university.

“I think for any university to fly in the face of an entire Legislature would be a foolhardy decision,” Mr. Alexander said last week.

Mr. Alexander’s treatment of the university has led to a barrage of criticism in Tampa, and he has been accused of being vengeful.

“The whole notion that we would set up a 12th university when we are cutting the budget for the other 11 is ridiculous,” said Pam Iorio, who served two terms as Tampa’s mayor and left the job last year. “This is just something that he wants. He wants it as a legacy project, to be able to leave office and to say in his hometown that this university was created by him.”

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