

Florida Trend

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The Lobbyists

(Higher Ed: Lobbyists)

Colleges spend millions on lobbyists to watch out for their individual interests in the Legislature.

By Amy Keller

Yolanda Jackson

Attorney, Becker & Poliakoff

Represents: Bethune-Cookman (Daytona Beach); Edward Waters (Jacksonville); Florida Memorial University (Miami)

Challenges: Historically black schools traditionally are associated with Democratic legislators but received their greatest allocation — more than \$12 million — under Republican Govs. Jeb Bush and Charlie Crist. Gov. Rick Scott's budget proposal eliminated funding for all but one black Florida university, but the Legislature restored the appropriations.

Rewards: "Eighty percent of the students who attend HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) come from household incomes of less than \$30,000 a year," Jackson says. "The majority are the first-time attendees of college in their families."

No. 1 rule of lobbying: "Tell the truth and tell both sides of the story. Sometimes your side is not necessarily the best side. Legislators and your clients appreciate you telling it to them straight," she says.

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