

Government Relations Update for March 2013

March Madness

- President Maples spent five full days in Salem this month, carrying Oregon Tech's message to legislators on the House Higher Education Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means. Joined on March 20th and 21st by the presidents of EOU, SOU, and WOU, the presidents focused on key messages related to university governance and shared services.

Their key messages:

- Provide an even playing field for small universities in regard to governance and institutional boards;
- Clearly identify the process for funding allocations and program approval for all universities;
- Ensure representation of small universities on the State Board of Higher Education and a proposed Special Committee on University Administration;
- Continue to offer shared services for the seven campuses that take advantage of economies of scale and provide advantages for all universities.

President Maples also advocated for the final \$10M in F-bonding to complete the finance package for the

Wilsonville Campus, a request for \$2M in Q-bonds for a facilities plan for Cornett Hall and other facilities master plan projects, and substantial investment by the state in Oregon Tech's operating budget and the Oregon Opportunity Grants for students.



EOU President, Bob Davies, SOU Chief-of-staff, Liz Shelby, SOU President Mary Cullinan, and WOU President Mark Weiss joined President Maples in the Capitol.

University Governance

The Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee held a public hearing and work session on SB270-3 during March. If passed, SB 270 will authorize governing boards for UO and PSU, and gives OSU the option to form an institutional governing board by January 2014. The bill also provides a path for individual governing boards for the small universities, by indicating an interest to the governor, and providing evidence to the Higher Education Coordinating Council of the university community support and proof of capacity and capability to be governed by a university board. SB270 also establishes a Special Committee on University Administration, Financial Sustainability and Shared Services to further study whether local governance is appropriate for the small universities, and the achievement of cost efficiencies and administrative streamlining.



Senator Mark Hass, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, is leading the work on SB 270.

It is likely that SB270 will be further amended before it is referred to the House Higher Education Committee, gets a fiscal impact analysis, is referred to Ways and Means, and finally is presented for a floor vote. In the process, Oregon Tech is seeking more clarity on how small universities will be governed in the interim, and the criteria to be used to demonstrate capabilities to have a governing board. Oregon Tech continues to advocate for options, including retaining the State Board of Higher Education for the universities without a local governing board, choosing a governing board, or exercising the option to seek a governing board at a later date. Stay tuned... we have three full months to go.

Administration and Shared Services

HB3120-2 proposes to consolidate multiple agency administrative functions into a new Office of Post-Secondary Education and Workforce Development. The vision of the governor's office is to combine the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, the Oregon Student Access Commission, the Office of Degree Authorization, and many duties currently housed in the Chancellor's Office into one mega-agency. This agency would also staff the newly formed Higher Education Coordinating Commission, which will coordinate budget allocations and program approvals for all community colleges and universities.

In hearings, legislators have questioned the need for the consolidation, and the details of how it will work in policy and practice. At this late stage in the process, it is unclear whether there are enough votes to advance HB3120 to passage.

Budget and Public Hearings

The Oregon University System presented its budget justification to the Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means for five days in March, culminating in a 90-minute public hearing in support of more funding for higher education. All the universities provided speakers to advocate on behalf of their campuses and the entire system, and asked the legislature to increase the amount of funds for university-level education above both the Governor's and the Co-Chairs' budget proposals.



Representative Betty Komp, Co-Chair of the Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means, listened to OUS budget testimony in March.

Oregon Tech's advocates included:

- Dan Williams, New Product Development, Powin Energy in Tualatin, who provided glowing remarks about the students he has hired from both the KF and Wilsonville Campuses.
- John Lee, CEO, Folium Partners in Ashland, spoke about the importance of STEM education and the targeted investments needed to prepare a technical workforce, especially for small, start-up companies.
- Joey Parnell, Echocardiography Student, Oregon Tech KF, told her story of being recruited on a sports scholarship to Oregon Tech, discovering Echo, working two or three jobs throughout college to pay her way, and her close proximity to a very promising career.

- Taylor Redding, Renewable Energy Engineering Student, Oregon Tech WIL, communicated his struggles as a low-income student who took many paths before finding REE at Oregon Tech. He asked for investment so that all students have opportunities, not just those whose families can help them pay for college.
- Deb Mumm-Hill, NW Director for FIRST and member of the STEM Partnership, talked about Oregon Tech’s leadership in STEM education, and the promising outcomes from dual credit, high-school transition and the OWLS scholarship program.
- Mark Ottenad, Government Relations, City of Wilsonville, on behalf of Mayor Knapp, talked about the importance of the university to the city and its business clusters.
- Barry Albertson, MD, Fanno Creek Clinic, provided written testimony, in which he made a passionate plea for more investment in education at all levels.



Taylor Redding, founder of Tech Owls in Action, testified in Salem about the need to control tuition costs and the state’s responsibility to help lower-income students.

Other Bills of Interest

Tuition Equity: HB2787 will ensure that graduates of Oregon high schools who are undocumented students have the opportunity to attend an Oregon public university and pay in-state tuition at any OUS institution. HB2787 was passed by the House on a 38-18 vote in February, and passed by the Senate by a vote of 19 – 11 on March 21st. It is awaiting the Governor’s signature.

STEM Investments: HB2636 recommends establishing a STEM Council to advise the OEIB and a STEM Fund to invest in STEM education programs in K12, colleges and universities. Oregon Tech could receive grants from this fund, if it is authorized.

STEM Oregon Opportunity Grants: SB702 directs Oregon Student Access Commission to award at least 50 percent of Oregon Opportunity Grant moneys awarded each year to qualified students majoring in science, technology, engineering or mathematical fields. The bill passed out of the Senate Education Committee on March 28th on a 5-0 vote, and is headed to Senate President Courtney to be referred to Ways and Means or to the House. President Maples testified in support of a similar bill, [HB3272](#), sponsored by Representative Davis (Wilsonville), in the House Higher Education Committee in March.

To read testimony by President Maples, go to:

[Legislative Testimony | Oregon Tech](#)

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Government Relations
Lita Colligan, Associate Vice President ~~ 503-821-1247 ~~ Lita.colligan@oit.edu