

Government Relations Update for March 2015

Movin' like the speed of light in March

Everyone in the Capitol agrees: the legislature has been hosting public hearings, work sessions and advancing bills faster than anyone can remember. It has been a busy month! All bills that are going to advance through the legislative process have to be passed by their originating policy committee by April 10th, so there is a rush to complete public hearings and work sessions in all the policy committees.



House Education Committee Chair Doherty, Vice Chair Sprenger, and Representative Reardon listen to Carleen Drago Starr opposed HB3126 that would place more limitations on qualifying high school teachers to teach dual credit courses.



Carleen Drago Starr, Academic Agreements Coordinator at Oregon Tech, prepares to testify on HB3126 along with David McDonald, WOU, and Mark Mulvihill, Intermountain ESD.

Bills of interest to Oregon Tech

[HB 2513](#): (Requires HECC to develop, maintain and manage a book buying consortium to purchase academic course materials). The HECC submitted testimony stating that the type of capacity needed for this would be really extensive.

[HB2516](#): (Requires community colleges and public universities to include the cost of required course materials as part of tuition and mandatory fees). Several members of the Committee indicated a desire to do something about the issue, though there is still a question of whether or not this bill is the right approach.

[HB2525](#): The House Higher Education Committee also held a Public Hearing on HB 2525 (Directs HECC to develop standards related to transferability of credits for community colleges and public universities). Rep. Read said that he wants the HECC to work with the universities to bring the committee a concept or idea of how to address the issue of credit loss when students are transferring. Oregon Tech and other advocates worked with the bill's sponsor on amendments to allow the HECC to study the issue, and return with recommendations.



*Chair of House
Higher Education
Committee, Rep.
Tobias Read,
Beaverton*

[HB 2561](#): (Requires HECC to evaluate best method for overseeing public universities to ensure universities interview at least one minority applicant when hiring head coach or athletic director). The “Rooney Rule” bill was put forth by Rep. Greenlick, who testified that the OUS had formerly done some work on this, and wanted to make sure that someone would continue that work after OUS. OSU testified on behalf of the seven universities, arguing that additional oversight wasn't necessary, and that the whole concept of the bill needed to be thought through in greater detail. OSU also requested amendments to address disparities in the hiring of female head coaches and athletic directors as well as minority applicants.

[HB2611](#): In the higher education world, the House Higher Education Committee held a public hearing on HB 2611 (Extends by six years period universities with institutional governing boards must participate in mandated shared services under the same terms, conditions, funding, model and policy frameworks as existing in 2013). Sen. Dembrow and Rep. Gallegos testified in support, arguing that for the time being, shared services allowed for savings for many of the universities and will give a sense of stability for all. UO and PSU both testified that the universities are working better together now than ever and that the committee should take a “wait and see” approach when it comes to shared services.

[HB 2747](#): (Increases limitation on subtraction for contribution to college savings network accounts to amount per designated beneficiary). The Committee Chair, Rep. Read, testified in support of the bill, arguing that everyone on the Committee recognizes the great cost of higher education. He talked about a 529 network plan. Rep. Read believes that this bill makes 529s much more effective.



*Rep. John Davis,
Wilsonville*

[HB 2728](#): (Establishes Oregon Talent Council). The Committee was generally pleased with the concept of phasing out the ETIC council and forming the Oregon Talent Council with a broader focus on strategic alliances to make investments in higher education that help colleges and universities stay current with industry needs. The Committee adopted the -2 Amendments and moved the bill out of Committee and down to Ways & Means. The bill is drafted with a \$15M price tag and was sponsored by Representatives Read, Johnson, Davis, and Senator Dembrow.

[HB 2973](#): (Establishes Affordable Baccalaureate Degree Act). This is Rep.

Whisnant’s “\$10,000 degree bill.” Oregon Tech worked with other advocates to amend the bill so that the HECC will study how to develop more options for “affordable degrees.” The bill is scheduled for a hearing on April 3rd.

[HB 3335](#): (Requires public universities to work with HECC to establish intermediate credentials for students who complete lower division graduation credits but do not complete course credits required for bachelor’s degree). Rep. Greenlick testified in favor of HB3335, arguing that it filled a need for students who spend some time in a four year university, but fail to complete their degree and come away with no



Representative Mitch Greenlick, Portland

certification or completion. Committee members agreed that there is a need to do something for students who start but never complete a four year degree. The bill was amended so that the HECC can study the issue and work with universities to offer solutions. It passed out of committee on April 1st.

[HB 3342](#): (Allows personal income taxpayers to subtract certain amounts paid as interest on qualified education loans from taxable income, subject to same income limitations applicable to federal education loan interest deduction). Rep. Rayfield testified in support of the bill, framing it as a practical solution to the huge student debt crisis. The Association of Realtors and the Homebuilders Association both expressed their concern over the bill, as it would reduce the amount of mortgage interest a person could deduct from their personal income taxes (capped at \$800k).

[SB 81](#): Senate Education Committee adopted the -1 Amendments to SB 81 (Requires tuition for certain courses offered at CC to be waived if person meets criteria). The bill, called the “free community college bill,” passed out of Committee on a party line vote and is headed down to Ways & Means. Advocates believe that the price tag may be too heavy a burden for it to pass.

[SB696](#): Dr. Kessler has been meeting with Senator Bates and his legislative aide to identify potential amendments to the bill that would continue to preserve the integrity of Applied Behavioral Therapist certification and practice. The bill has not yet been scheduled.

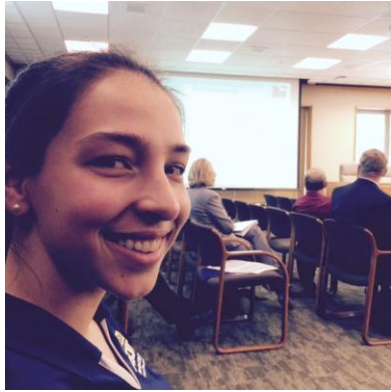
[SB 932](#): (Extends eligibility for receiving Oregon financial aid scholarships and grants to certain students who qualify for exemption from paying nonresident tuition). This bill is aimed at helping those undocumented students who qualify for admission to college. Sen. Dembrow and Rep. Vega Pederson testified in favor of the bill, as did close to a dozen students who would be directly impacted by the bill.



Representative Jessica Vega Pederson, Portland

In terms of general highlights around the building, Governor Brown signed her “Motor-Voter” bill into law. This is the bill that seeks to automatically register people to vote using DMV records. The bill was a

priority of then Secretary of State Brown. Oregon now has one of the most progressive voter registration laws in the country.



Alyssa Deardorff, one of Oregon Tech's Student Ambassadors at the Wilsonville Campus, testified in support of Oregon Tech's capital construction project, Center for Excellence in Engineering & Technology/ Cornett Hall Renovation.

Budget Priorities

- Oregon's Public Universities will stage four days of testimony in support of a higher education budget that is at least \$755M, far above the Governor's recommended budget of \$624M and the Co-Chairs' budget of \$670M. The first day of testimony will be April 8th, and it will be followed by presentations on April 9th, 13th, 14th and then public testimony on April 15th. If you are interested in seeing Budget Advocacy in Action, watch the hearings from 8:30 – 10:00 am in the Education Subcommittee of Joint Ways and Means.

[All hearings are streamed on the Oregon Legislative Information System.](#)

- Oregon Tech and all the universities will present their capital construction projects to the Capital Construction

Subcommittee of Ways and Means on April 3rd. We will be seeking \$10.92M in state bonding to support Phase One of the Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology/Cornett Renovation project.



OSU President Ed Ray and Brian Fox, HECC, describe the capital construction requests for all seven universities to the Capital Construction Subcommittee of Ways and Means.

Article of Interest:

[Higher ed commission asking for \\$143 million for Opportunity Grant](#)
[Statesman Journal](#)

<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/education/2015/03/29/higher-ed-commission-asking-million-opportunity-grant/70648814/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=>

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