

Public and Government Affairs Update



STATE RELATIONS

Ducks' Rose Bowl victory recognized

The Oregon House Rules Committee unanimously approved a resolution honoring the 2011 Ducks football team last week, sending the legislation to the full House for a vote as early as this week. [HCR 204](#) states that “we, the members of the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly, recognize and celebrate the achievements of the 2011 University of Oregon football team and the recent years of success of the University of Oregon football program.”

After passage, a copy of the bill will be presented to the Ducks football team and Head Coach Chip Kelly.

STATE RELATIONS

February legislative session opens with focus on budget, jobs issues

The Oregon Legislature's first even-year session opened on February 1, 2012. The legislature will consider more than 270 bills during the month-long session, focusing on state budget shortfalls, jobs, and the economy.

With diminished revenue projections since the adoption of the 2011–13 budget, the primary task of lawmakers during the session will be to find ways to meet projected shortfalls in the state budget. Revenue forecasts have dropped \$300 million since the last session and a revised projection due February 8 is expected to show an even greater shortfall.

Lawmakers will also consider several proposals important to higher education, including bills to help control textbook costs and to examine the legality of carrying concealed weapons in public buildings and on school grounds. [HR 4058](#) directs the Joint Boards of Education and Higher Education Coordinating Commission to prepare a report on strategies for reducing higher education textbook costs. The bill, sponsored by the House Interim Committee on Higher Education, would require the boards to look at a variety of options, including bulk-purchasing, the promotion of open-source materials, and the use of shared online materials.

Governance is on the agenda again with at least four proposals that would influence how higher education is managed in Oregon. Eugene-Springfield-area State

Representatives Phil Barnhart (D-Central Lane and Linn counties) and Terry Beyer (D-Springfield) each have introduced bills to address higher education reform. Barnhart's bill, [HB 4086](#), would create local governing boards for the University of Oregon and Portland State University. Beyer's bill, [HB 4062](#), would abolish the Oregon University System and the Office of the Chancellor and transfer the authority to the Oregon Education Investment Board. Additionally, the House Interim Committee on Higher Education introduced [HB 4061](#) that would establish a Special Committee on University Governance. The special committee would analyze issues of higher education coordination and governance, examine next steps for establishing local governing boards, and report its findings and recommendations to the governor and Legislature. A final bill, [SB 1538](#), would give the Oregon Education Investment Board the

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authority to approve or reject Oregon University System funding requests and performance compacts.

Lawmakers have until February 14 to hold hearings for bills in the bill's chamber of origin and until February 23 to hold a final hearing for bills that do not receive a hearing by the Ways and Means, Revenue, and Rules committees.

STATE RELATIONS

UO President Berdahl testifies before State Board committee, presents at City Club of Eugene

On January 20, University of Oregon President Robert Berdahl spoke before the Oregon State Board of Higher Education's Governance and Policy Committee on the UO's proposed independent board. The committee convened to look at the example of Oregon Health & Science University's local governing board model. In addition to President Berdahl, members heard from current OHSU President Joe Robertson, Portland State University President Wim Wiewel, and Oregon State University President Edward Ray.

In his testimony before the Governance and Policy Committee, Berdahl outlined the advantages the UO would gain by establishing an independent board. According to Berdahl, a local board would allow the UO to maintain a focused commitment to its mission and market, act in a timely manner in financing and operations, and remain a globally competitive university. Berdahl emphasized that the UO would remain a public university.

Berdahl also outlined the key aspects of the independent board that the UO is seeking: the authority to hire, evaluate, and dismiss the president; the authority to issue revenue bonds and prioritize capital projects; the ability to independently manage human resources, including the



From left to right: Sonya Margerum, Fairmount neighbor; Patricia Neighbor, CommUniversity Assistant GTF; Jane Brubaker, Campus Operations; Sandra Austin, Fairmount neighbor; Camilla Bayliss, Fairmount Neighbor Association co-chair; Jennifer Summers, Office of the Dean of Students; Molly Bennison, CommUniversity Assistant; Alan Zelenka, Eugene City Councilor; Karen Hyatt, Government and Community Relations

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Students and neighbors plant shade trees at Agate Playground

On February 1, the UO's Agate Playground gained two trees that will provide more shade to children and families who frequent the popular spot near East 19th Avenue and Agate Street. The project was a collaborative venture of the Fairmount neighbors, tree request originator Sonya Margerum, the UO CommUniversity Assistant Program—a student neighborhood ambassador program housed in the Office of the Dean of

Students, Campus Operations, and Government and Community Relations. Eugene City Councilor Alan Zelenka, Fairmount Neighbors Association co-chair Camilla Bayliss, and children from the Vivian Olum Child Development Center joined CommUniversity Assistants and UO staff members in a joyful ceremony that included shovels of dirt and plenty of stomping to secure the red elder trees in place.

creation and implementation of a salary plan for the faculty and administrators; and the power to design an affordability framework to meet the specific needs of UO students and their families.

Berdahl emphasized the importance of a strong coordinating body, such as the Oregon Education Investment Board, to which an independent board would be accountable for goals set by the state (such as the state's 40-40-20 vision) and coordination of new programs or degrees. He suggested that a University of Oregon independent board would fit along with other OUS universities into the policy framework of the broadly focused OEIB, anchored by the achievement compact that the UO would develop with the OEIB.

President Berdahl spoke to some of the same issues at the City Club of Eugene on Friday, February 3, appearing on a panel with Oregon University System Chancellor George Pernsteiner. Download the audio version of the event [here](#).

FEDERAL RELATIONS

President Obama highlights basic research, student aid, higher education in speeches

In his [State of the Union address](#) on January 24 and in [a follow up speech at the University of Michigan](#) on January 25, President Barack Obama discussed three issues of particular interest to research universities: college tuition increases and student aid, basic research, and immigration.

In his State of the Union speech, the president urged state governments to elevate higher education in their budget priorities and called on Congress to double the number of work-study jobs within five years, permanently extend the American Opportunity Task Credit, and prevent interest rates on subsidized

federal student loans from rising from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1, as currently scheduled. He also voiced his support for sustaining federal investment in basic research and called on Congress to approve legislation to allow people brought to this country illegally at a young age to earn citizenship (the DREAM Act) and to allow foreign students who earn college degrees in business and STEM fields to remain in the U.S. for work.

In a subsequent speech at the University of Michigan, President Obama followed up on his State of the Union comments by laying out a plan to use federal campus-based aid programs—College Work Study, Perkins Loans, and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants—and new competitive funding programs to motivate state governments and higher education institutions to improve college affordability and value for students.

He proposed a change to the formula for campus-based aid to shift aid away from institutions with rising tuition costs and increase Perkins Loan funding from the current \$1 billion to \$8 billion. He also proposed a \$1 billion grant competition modeled after his previous K–12 initiative, Race to the Top, to encourage states to adopt certain higher education reforms, including an alignment of K–12 and college standards and the maintenance of “adequate” levels of higher education funding. Another proposed competition would provide \$55 million for individual colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations to “develop, validate, or scale up innovative and effective strategies for boosting productivity and enhancing quality on campuses.”

Finally, he proposed the creation of a “College Scorecard” for each degree-granting institution to give students and families more information about costs, graduation rates, and potential postgraduation earnings. This scorecard would also require institutions to provide

STATE RELATIONS

Bonamici wins race for Oregon's 1st Congressional District



The voters of Oregon's 1st Congressional District selected former State Senator and University of Oregon alumna Suzanne Bonamici to represent them in Washington, D.C. During a January special election, Bonamici beat the Republican nominee, businessman Rob Cornilles, by fourteen percentage points. Congresswoman-elect Bonamici will now travel to the nation's capital and serve out the remainder of the term of former Congressman David Wu, who resigned last year.

Bonamici holds both a BA in journalism and a JD in law from the University of Oregon.

information for a “Financial Aid Shopping Sheet,” so families can more easily compare financial aid packages.

The president is expected to outline more of his plans concerning higher education, basic research, and student financial aid in the coming weeks as he prepares to release his FY2013 budget proposal.

STATE RELATIONS

UO Foundation President Paul Weinhold offers testimony to legislative panels

During the interim Legislative Days meetings from January 17–19 and again on February 2 during the regular session, the Oregon House Higher Education Committee held hearings on higher education governance reforms.

During the January meeting, University of Oregon Foundation President Paul Weinhold praised the 2011 Legislature for the passage of SB 242 and SB 909, which respectively gave the Oregon University System greater autonomy and created the Governor’s Oregon Education Investment Board, an early childhood through post-doctoral coordinating authority.

Weinhold went on to say that those bills are the first steps to further advancement of key higher education reforms. He advocated a path toward the creation of independent governing boards so Oregon’s public universities can help the state meet ambitious educational attainment goals and create a structure of university governance that recognizes the unique mission and student needs of each of Oregon’s seven public universities. Additionally, Weinhold urged legislators to allow universities greater ability to leverage public and private resources for universities in times of diminishing state support.

Associated Students of the University of Oregon President Ben Eckstein also testified to the Legislature, urging lawmakers

to ensure a role for students as governance deliberations progress.

Weinhold appeared before the committee again in a February hearing to testify in support of amendments to [HB 4061](#), a bill that would create a special committee on university governance. The bill as initially written would task the special committee with investigating governance issues and reporting back to the Legislature in 2013. The amendments call on the committee to look specifically at the issue of local governing boards and to recommend a way forward. Weinhold built on his previous testimony by highlighting the specific role that independent governing boards would play in securing affordability and access for Oregon students. He expressed support for an interim panel to recommend a clear path for the creation of university-specific boards during the next legislative session. The panel voted to amend the bill and will hold another work session to address the amended version on February 7.

STATE RELATIONS

OEIB holds public meetings on 0-20 Education Plan

On January 26, the Oregon Education Investment Board held a public meeting at Lane Community College on its goals and strategies for education in Oregon. A standing-room-only crowd listened to and offered feedback on the board’s blueprint for education, [Oregon Learns](#), a nearly 200-page report that was released by the board in December.

The report reiterates the state’s goal of a 40 percent bachelor’s degree completion rate among Oregonians by 2025. It calls for another 40 percent of Oregonians to have completed post–high school training such as an associate’s degree or specialized training by the same year. The report also outlines the role of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission created by Senate Bill 242 last session.

Beginning in July 2012, the commission will be charged with developing goals and associated accountability measures for Oregon’s postsecondary education system, including community colleges, public universities, and the Oregon Student Access Commission.

The board completed a series of public input meetings on January 31 and will now present its findings to the Legislature.

STATE RELATIONS

Beyer, Nelson to step down at end of terms

State Representative Terry Beyer (D-Springfield) announced last Tuesday that she will not seek reelection this year. Representative Beyer has served five full terms in the Oregon House of Representatives and, during the 2011 session, co-chaired the Joint Ways and Means, Transportation, and Economic Development Subcommittee. She is current co-chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee. She has endorsed former Springfield Mayor John Lively to fill her seat.

UO graduate and State Senator David Nelson (R-Pendleton) has also announced that he will not seek reelection. Senator Nelson is serving his fourth term in the Oregon Senate, since joining the Oregon Senate in 1996. He is a 1964 graduate of the University of Oregon’s political science department and went on to earn a law degree from the University of Montana. He has endorsed University of Oregon alumnus and long-time Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Hansell to fill his seat.

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