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Public and Government Affairs Update

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Issue No. 42

STATE AFFAIRS

UO student housing request approved by Ways and Means

The Oregon Legislature’s Joint Ways and Means Committee met in Salem on January 14 and approved a number of capital construction funding requests for the Oregon University System, including the University of Oregon’s request for \$75 million in Article XI-F(1) bonds for the construction of the East Campus Residence Hall. The committee’s action moves the request to the full legislature where it will be considered during the February supplemental session as part of an omnibus capital construction bill.



The University of Oregon’s Vice President for Finance and Administration Frances Dyke, Vice President for Student Affairs Robin Holmes, and Associate Vice President for Public and Government Affairs Betsy Boyd were on hand for the hearing. The committee approved the request without objection.

Oregon Legislature to convene Feb. 1

Until recently, the Oregon Legislature was one of just five states where lawmakers convene only every other year. Since 1885, Oregon’s constitution has limited regular sessions to odd-numbered-years. Over the decades, Oregon governors have called 36 special sessions to address urgent state business during periods when the legislature was not in regular session – and 16 of those special sessions have occurred since 1981.



Starting in 2008, as part of a move toward annual sessions, the Oregon Legislature began a practice of
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STATE AFFAIRS

UO welcomes new state relations director

Courtney White joins the Office of Government and Community Relations on January 25 as the University of Oregon’s new Director of State Relations.



A graduate of the University of Oregon School of Law, Courtney joins the university’s government relations team after spending the last five years as the Director of Legislative Services and Research with the Utah Education Association, Utah’s largest lobbying organization. He also holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration from the University of Utah and has worked at the Nevada, Oregon, and Utah higher education system offices.

Courtney’s advocacy experience combined with his knowledge and expertise in K-12 education and higher education issues make him an ideal addition to the university’s team. He is available at crwhite@uoregon.edu or 541-346-8051.

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For more information about this newsletter, please contact Eric Stillwell in Government and Community Relations at (541) 346-5381 or email to eam@uoregon.edu.

If you are interested in inviting government officials to a UO event, please contact us first. We can help! Give us a call or send an email to gcr@uoregon.edu.

PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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FEDERAL AFFAIRS

Final federal budget includes funding for UO research projects

The Defense appropriations conference report approved in late December included direct or shared access to \$14 million in nanoscience and neuro-science congressional interest projects for the University of Oregon. The Brain Safety Net project received \$2.4 million. Several Oregon Nanoscience and Microtechnologies Institute (ONAMI) programs were also funded for a total of \$11.6 million. ONAMI is a collaboration of world-class industry, academic and federal research institutions, which includes the University of Oregon.

The conference report marks the end of the legislative process for this appropriations bill which was signed into law last month. The Oregon congressional delegation advocated for and supported the university’s requests.

Legislature convenes Feb. 1

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calling a February supplemental session during even-numbered years to address limited, urgent state business. For the first time, legislators invoked a procedure which allows them to call a supplemental session without the direction of the governor, and will do so again next month.

A draft constitutional amendment for annual sessions has recently cleared a Senate committee and will be introduced during the February session. If approved by legislators in both chambers, the measure would be referred to the ballot for a statewide vote.

The 2010 supplemental session will convene February 1 and will run no later than February 28. The 2008 session ran 19 days and lawmakers dealt with 109 bills. The 2010 session will deal with at least 200 bills, and more are pending because each senator will be allowed to introduce two bills and each representative one bill, plus bills generated by committees.

The central issue that may face legislators in February will be the rebalancing of the state budget if voters reject Measures 66 and 67 in an election that occurs just six days prior to session.

STATE RELATIONS

Tuesday election to decide tax measures

The Jan. 26 election will determine the fate of Measures 66 and 67 – two tax measures approved by the Legislature during the 2009 regular legislative session. A “yes” vote will affirm the Legislature’s passage of the bills. A “no” vote will overturn the Legislature’s vote and prevent the bills from becoming law. The two measures are HB 2649 (Measure 66) and HB 3405 (Measure 67). Both measures have the effect of raising revenue for the state’s General Fund.

The two tax measures were part of a broader effort by the Legislature to fill an estimated \$4 billion budget gap for the 2009-11 biennium with a combination of spending cuts, federal stimulus money, rainy day funds, and these additional tax revenues. If voters do not affirm the two tax measures, legislators will need to find ways to rebalance the budget during the February session, most likely through additional cuts in agency budgets, including higher education. The non-partisan Legislative Revenue Office has a report on [Measures 66 & 67](#) available online.

Don’t forget to vote!



Ballots not already in the mail can still be hand-delivered to ballot drop-off boxes. All ballots must be received by 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 26. A list of Lane County drop box locations is available [online](#). For non-Lane County locations, please consult your county elections office.

UO Government and Community Relations



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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

UO research park conditional use permit extension under review



A land use hearing was held Wednesday, January 20, to hear an appeal to the City of Eugene’s decision to grant a 3-year extension to the UO’s Riverfront Research Park conditional

use permit (CUP). The extension would allow construction of two buildings in the park, including a new home for the Oregon Research Institute (ORI).

The university has leased four acres to a developer, the Trammell Crow Company, to build a four-story, 80,000 square-foot building on the northwest corner of the research park for ORI and the Educational Policy Improvement Center, a UO spin-off.

At the hearing, 49 people testified including 29 on behalf of the UO’s extension request. The hearings official left the public record open for additional submissions until Wednesday, Jan. 27 at 5:00 p.m. Rebuttals will be allowed until 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 3. Comments can be submitted to the city’s associate planner Heather O’Donnell at heather.m.odonnell@ci.eugene.or.us.

What Oregon is doing for Oregon

Academic Affairs has announced the launch of the new Academic Outreach website at <http://academicoutreach.uoregon.edu>. The site is designed to provide a resource to the State and internal university audiences that showcases the positive, far-reaching impact of the UO on Oregon communities.

The University of Oregon has a long history of committed outreach to the residents and communities of Oregon. With more than eighty programs in operation at any time, the University of Oregon extends its academic expertise into Oregon communities throughout the state, supporting thousands of our fellow citizens and residents.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

County and cities review 2009 and look to the future

The university’s Government and Community Relations staff were on hand Tuesday, January 5, for the State of the County event held by the Lane County Board of Commissioners at Harris Hall, and the State of the City event held that evening by the Eugene City Council and Mayor Kitty Piercy at the Hult Center.

UO representatives were also on hand for Springfield’s State of the City event on Wednesday, January 6, hosted by Mayor Sid Leiken and council members at the Wildish Theater.

There was near universal consensus at the three events that 2009 was a tough year for local governments, but policymakers held out hope for a better year ahead, despite economic challenges which continue to impact the state, county and local communities.



DIVISI performs at Eugene’s State of the City event.

At the Eugene event a large poster board entitled “Eugene 2010” stood behind the council members sitting on a stage. The letters E-U-G-E-N-E represented six areas of significance for city policymakers, with the “U” representing the University of Oregon and the ongoing efforts by all parties to advance the town and gown relationship. The UO women’s *a cappella* group DIVISI performed twice during the program, singing “Don’t You Worry ‘Bout a Thing” by Stevie Wonder, and “Imagine” by John Lennon.

During her presentation of community awards, Mayor Piercy presented an award for “effective, accountable municipal government” to the Walnut Station Stakeholder Group, which included Community Relations Director Greg Rikhoff representing the university’s participation in the group.



Pictured (L-R): Mayor Piercy with representatives of the Walnut Station Stakeholder Group: Greg Rikhoff for the UO, Kristen Taylor for the Fairmount Neighbors, Lydia McKinney for the city, and Jared Mason-Gere for the chamber of commerce.

Photos courtesy City of Eugene



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

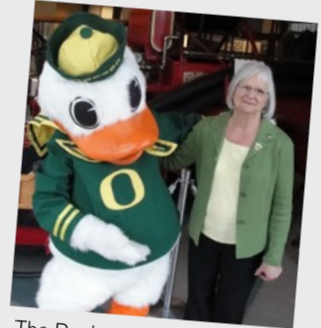
Mayors have fun and express pride with Civil War wager



Mayor Tomlinson

In the run-up to the 2009 Civil War football game between the UO and OSU, Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy and Corvallis Mayor Charlie Tomlinson made a friendly wager that the mayor with the losing team would wear the winning university's shirt to a city council meeting.

The Oregon Ducks' 37-33 victory over the Beavers put them on the road to Pasadena, and it put Mayor Piercy and the Oregon Duck on the road to Corvallis.



The Duck with Mayor Piercy

Mayor Tomlinson wore the green and yellow tie-dye t-shirt during the December 14 meeting of the Corvallis City Council. The Oregon Duck handed out green and yellow—and black and orange—football beads to council members, while Piercy noted that she and Tomlinson are collaborators on many fronts and are both proud of their universities. She concluded her remarks by saying, “Go Beavers! Go Ducks! Go Oregon!”

You can watch video news coverage of the event online at KVAL.com.