



# Public and Government Affairs Update



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## Upcoming town hall meetings

Local Lane County legislators will be holding town hall meetings the next two Saturdays to discuss the accomplishments of the February legislative session. These are opportunities for constituents to interact with their elected officials and ask questions.

University of Oregon advocates in the Eugene/Springfield area are encouraged to attend one or both of these town hall meetings and thank these legislators for supporting \$75 million in bonding authority for the UO's east campus residence hall project and for providing additional funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

### Town hall meeting in Springfield:



**When:** Saturday, March 6, 9:30–11:30 AM

**Who:** Senators Bill Morrisette and Floyd Prozanski and Representatives Phil Barnhart, Elizabeth Terry Beyer and Paul Holvey

**Where:** Springfield City Council Chambers, 225 5th Street, Springfield

### Town hall meeting in Eugene:



**When:** Saturday, March 13, 10:00–11:30 AM

**Who:** Senator Chris Edwards and Representatives Val Hoyle and Nancy Nathanson

**Where:** Willamette High School Cafeteria, 1801 Echo Hollow Road, Eugene



The month long supplemental legislative session adjourned Thursday afternoon, February 25th, a couple days prior to the end of February deadline agreed to by legislative leaders. Adjournment was delayed a day to work out a deal on annual legislative sessions. The subsequent November ballot measure to Senate Joint Resolution 41's passage will allow the public to decide whether the legislature should meet annually. It is a plan that would have the legislature convene for 160 days in odd years and 35 days in even years.

The legislative session began on the heels of Oregon voter approval of Measures 66 and 67. The two measures are projected to raise \$733 million for the current 2009-11 biennium budget cycle. This revenue represents five percent of the state's general fund spending plan approved by legislators last year – which primarily covers education (including universities and community colleges), health and

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**Congressman Blumenauer meets UO's SCI team**



*U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon, with green bow tie) recently met with the UO's Sustainable Cities Initiative team who have been working on the [Gresham project](#). The meeting took place at Gresham City Hall.*

**Legislative wrap-up**

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human services, public safety and the courts. Revenue forecasts for the 2011-13 biennium are uncertain. Passage of Measures 66 and 67, however, postponed extreme reductions to state budgets including higher education and gave the state economy more time to recover before difficult budgetary decisions are made.

**Highlights from the session**

**President Lariviere visits with legislators.**

University of Oregon President Lariviere spent several days engaging legislators in Salem on issues important to the UO. He participated in scheduled visits with approximately a dozen legislators. He had shorter conversations with many others.

**UO east campus residence hall funding is approved.** Of particular interest to the UO community was the passage of Senate Bill 5563, the capital construction bill. The bill passed the House with a vote of 28-2 and the Senate with a vote of 37-20. Included in SB5563 was legislative authorization for \$75 million in Article XI-F(1) bonds for the UO east campus residence hall. Senate President Peter Courtney highlighted the jobs the residence hall project will create for Oregonians in a press release about the project indicating that it would “sustain the equivalent of 126 construction jobs throughout the 22-month duration of the project, with peak on-site employment of approximately 300 workers.”

The housing project includes a 449-bed multi-purpose facility that will contain faculty offices, classroom space and other programming in addition to being a residence hall. This new housing will add

to current options and bring greater faculty participation into the student residence experience. The residence hall will be located on the corner of 15th Avenue and Moss Street.

**Oregon Opportunity Grant Program receives additional funding.** House Bill 5100 included an additional \$9.7 million in funding for Oregon Opportunity Grants in the 2009-10 academic year. The Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) is expected to restore the announced award reductions of \$120 for full-time students and \$60 for part-time students for the Spring quarter and second semester according the news release about the topic by the Senate Majority office.

**OUS fund balances not swept.** OUS institutions, including the UO, were concerned that “ending fund balances,” which is money that frequently is committed but can appear to still be available in the OUS budget, would be swept or disappropriated by the legislature. The fund balances were left intact for now but the issue will likely be re-examined in January 2011 when the legislature reconvenes in light of the fact that fund balances in a number of other state agencies have already been swept.

**Change to bond law helpful to OUS.** House Joint Resolution 101 is a constitutional amendment that addresses the ability of the state’s public universities to use Article XI-F(1) and XI-G bonds to meet their capital needs and serve Oregon students. HJR 101 will save taxpayer dollars by ensuring universities have access to the lowest-cost financing. It also clarifies the ability of universities to use bonds to purchase existing buildings. This measure will be put before Oregon voters in May.

**UO to assist with Chinese language study in Oregon schools.** Senate Joint Resolution 50 that requests the Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction encourage Chinese language study in Oregon schools passed. The text of the resolution notes that the UO and PSU have been designated Confucius Institutes and are prepared to assist interested Oregon public schools in applying for and establishing Confucius classrooms on all interested elementary and secondary school campuses.

The Governor has thirty business days from the end of the session to make a decision about which bills he will sign. He will likely take much of that time in making his decisions. Please do not hesitate to contact Director of State Relations Courtney White at [crwhite@uoregon.edu](mailto:crwhite@uoregon.edu) or 541-346-8051 with questions or for additional information.