



# Public and Government Affairs Update



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March 8, 2011

Issue No. 57

## STATE RELATIONS

### **Overflow crowd turns out for New Partnership**

Led by testimony from UO President Richard Lariviere, supporters from throughout the state filled two committee rooms to discuss SB 559 and SJR 20, the New Partnership legislation designed to improve university governance and stabilize tuition.

During his testimony, President Lariviere notified the committee of an amendment at the request of chief sponsor Sen Chris Edwards and in consultation with Governor Kitzhaber to SB 559 which would

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## STATE RELATIONS

### **Tuition equity bill receives first legislative hearing**

SB 742, the “Tuition Equity” bill, received a hearing in the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee on Thursday, March 3 before an overflow crowd. The bill would consider certain students to be residents for the purpose of determining tuition and fees at Oregon public universities. SB 742 would grant in-state tuition to students who have lived in Oregon, attended Oregon schools, graduated from an Oregon high school, and

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## FEDERAL RELATIONS

### **UO president meets with Oregon delegation**

University of Oregon President Richard Lariviere was in Washington, DC last week to meet with members of Oregon’s congressional delegation and host a reception for area alumni and university supporters.

President Lariviere discussed the impact of proposed cuts to Pell grants and research funding and presented information about the University of Oregon and its [federal policy and budget priorities](#). With the FY2011 budget not yet enacted and the FY2012 budget just introduced, the federal funding environment dominated discussions.

President Lariviere made the point throughout his visits that the federal government is the university’s largest funder. Thanks to federal

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*For more information about this newsletter, please contact Jared Mason-Gere at (541) 346-5381 or [jaredm@uoregon.edu](mailto:jaredm@uoregon.edu). If you are interested in inviting government officials to a UO event, please contact us first at 346-5020 or [gcr@uoregon.edu](mailto:gcr@uoregon.edu). We can help!*

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

**University supports bus rapid transit extension; Council action slated for March 9**

Citing the importance of public transit in the daily lives of the campus community, The University of Oregon submitted official comments in support of the West Eugene EmX (Emerald Express) bus rapid transit extension in early February. At a hearing that drew hundreds to the Eugene Hilton, the University expressed support for the construction of an EmX spur running from Downtown Eugene to West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

In a letter signed by UO President Richard Lariviere, Vice President for Student Affairs Robin Holmes, and Vice President for Finance and Administration Frances Dyke, the university pointed to the role EmX has played in moving students from campus to students' homes and places of employment. University leaders also discussed the importance of EmX in facilitating travel to the newly opened Matthew Knight Arena, and ensuring that the campus can continue to accommodate a rapidly growing student population.

Nearly 25% of off-campus students use Lane Transit District transportation to get to campus each day, as do more than 12% of faculty and staff.

The Eugene City Council is scheduled to recommend a West Eugene EmX route on Wednesday, March 9 at their noon work session.

FEDERAL RELATIONS

**DeFazio, Blumenauer meet with students, faculty on campus**

Two members of Oregon's congressional delegation visited campus recently to meet with students and faculty.

On February 25, Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) visited campus to talk with students about his work in Congress. The event was jointly hosted by the Political Science Department and the Office of Government and Community Relations, but was attended by students from a variety of disciplines.

After a brief introduction by Professor Priscilla Southwell, chair of the Political Science department, Congressman DeFazio spoke on the recent debates over the budget in DC. He spoke about his attempts to amend the continuing resolution by offering provisions to limit subsidies to oil producers as well as other pressing budget issues.

Students asked question on issues ranging from high speed rail to veterans benefits.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon) came to campus Friday, March 4 to meet with UO faculty and to serve as the keynote speaker for the 29th UO Public Interest Environmental Law Conference.

Congressman Blumenauer, a member of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee in the US House of Representatives, met with faculty who study tax policy and exchanged ideas about tax policy and government finance. Congressman Blumenauer, who is a longtime champion for livability, also met leaders of UO's Sustainable Cities Initiative to discuss the future of this innovative project.



FEDERAL RELATIONS

**UO Urges Senate to reject research cuts in House FY11 CR**

The University of Oregon joined a group of 170 higher education and business organizations and institutions that sent a letter to all members of the US Senate on March 3 urging senators to reject the funding cuts in key research agencies adopted by the House as part of its long-term FY11 continuing resolution (CR).

The letter, spearheaded by the Task Force on American Innovation ([www.innovationtaskforce.org](http://www.innovationtaskforce.org)) urges Senators to continue to support the goals of the COMPETES Act and reject the House-approved cuts that would “significantly reduce funding for the key research agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as well as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education programs contained in that law.”

Congress first enacted the COMPETES Act in 2007 on a bipartisan basis. It created a broad blueprint for strengthening the pillars of American innovation and competitiveness by increasing the nation’s commitment to basic research in the physical sciences and engineering, strengthening STEM education, and fostering a business environment to drive innovation. These initiatives were based on the recommendations contained in the National Academies’ report, “Rising Above the Gathering Storm.” The law was reauthorized on a bipartisan basis late last year.

STATE RELATIONS

**Duck Store leadership presents to legislature**

On February 21, the Oregon House Subcommittee on Higher Education held a hearing on HB 2963, which seeks to make textbooks more affordable for Oregon students. This bill sponsored by State Representative Michael Dembrow (D-Portland) would require Oregon’s Joint Boards of Higher Education to prepare a report on strategies for reducing higher education textbook costs by October 2012.

Bruce Lundy, UO Book Division Leader, offered testimony on ways that the Duck Store helps to control textbook prices for students. According to Lundy, the Duck Store discounts “textbooks 10% off the new price, and used copies are at least 25% less than that. These savings amount to over \$1,000,000 per year for students at the University of Oregon, and over the last twelve years the discount has amounted to over \$10,000,000.” The store employs a variety of methods to keep costs low, including negotiating prices for used textbooks and offering online textbooks. In addition, this spring the Duck Store will launch the use of new software that will allow it to price its textbooks title-by-title to be competitive with online textbook sales via Amazon.com, half.com, and other online booksellers.

The subcommittee passed the bill with a “do-pass” recommendation to the full House Education committee, which will deliberate the legislation before possible passage to the full House of Representatives for a vote.



FEDERAL RELATIONS

**Two-week CR enacted to keep Federal Government open**

Congress has approved, and President Obama has signed, a two-week continuing resolution (CR) to sustain federal funding after the current CR expired Friday. This heads off, at least temporarily, the threat of a government shutdown. The House vote on the bill (H. J. Res 44) was 335 to 91; the Senate vote was 91 to 9.

The short-term CR funds federal agencies and programs at largely their FY10 levels, minus \$4 billion. The measure largely avoids controversial policy issues and achieves most of its savings by cutting unobligated FY2010 congressional earmarks and eliminating programs the White House has already targeted in its FY12 budget proposal. The cuts include earmarks in the Department of Energy Office of Science and in the Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education, as well as elimination of the Leveraging Educational Assistance Program. The short-term CR does not cut Pell Grants.

**GCR welcomes Nate Stice**

Nathanael Stice joined the Government and Community Relations team as a graduate student intern and will continue through the spring. He is in his final term in UO's Master of Public Administration program and plans to pursue a career in public policy. Before graduate school, Nate directed a political field office, interned in the office of Congressman David Wu (D-Oregon), and held a Junior Fellowship at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Nate completed his undergraduate studies at Willamette University and is proud to be both a Duck and Bearcat.

STATE RELATIONS

**University presents overview to House Higher Ed Subcommittee**

University President Richard Lariviere testified before the Oregon House Subcommittee on Higher Education as part of a series of informational hearings on Oregon's public universities. President Lariviere was joined by a PathWayOregon student who described how the program allowed him to afford to pursue his college education.

President Lariviere also discussed the University of Oregon's economic impacts on the state of Oregon, as well as the work the university does to ensure qualified Oregon students are able to pursue a degree at the university despite declining state funding and increasing student costs. The president's remarks joined those of Oregon Institute of Technology president Chris Maples, Oregon State University president Ed Ray, and Portland State University president Wim Wiewel. Previously, Oregon University System Chancellor George Pernsteiner had shared information about OUS before Western Oregon University president John Minahan and Southern Oregon University president Mary Cullinan discussed their institutions.

**Oregon delegation**

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student aid and research programs, the federal government contributes more than five times

the university's revenue as the state. The Administration's proposed FY2012 budget keeps the Pell grant at a maximum award of \$5,550 and better funds research programs than alternatives advanced by the



## **New Partnership Hearing**

*(Continued from page 1)*

cap annual tuition increases at 5% for resident undergraduates. The amendment would ensure the legislation protects college accessibility and affordability. The additions to the legislation also will ensure the involvement of Oregon’s legislature in critical decision-making at the University.

The hearing began with remarks from Senator Chris Edwards (D-Eugene), chief sponsor of the bills, and Senator Lee Beyer (D-Springfield), a co-sponsor, as well as Senator Dave Nelson (R-Pendleton), who supports the bills. President Lariviere followed with a detailed description of the New Partnership plan. Students, business leaders, parents, public school educators, UO Alumni Association board members and UO Foundation Trustees all joined in to share their thoughts concerning the importance of dramatically revamping Oregon’s approach to higher education. Professor Ian McNeeley, Interim Chair of the University Senate’s Academic Council, explained his support for stabilizing university funding while also referencing the Academic Council’s report endorsing the proposal.

Members of the Oregon Student Association, including ASUO president Amelie Rousseau, and the Service Employees International Union Local 503 testified with concerns about the governance model, whether the approach works for other universities, and best ways to manage tuition.

Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton) stated that he was impressed by the level of attention higher education reform was getting in the committee, and suggested that SB 559 and SJR 20, the New

Partnership bills, would receive more deliberation in the coming weeks. Hass

intends for the Senate to first focus on SB 242, which many consider a first step in higher education governance reform. SB 242 was passed from the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee this afternoon, and will now move to the Joint Ways and Means Committee.

As follow up to the hearing, President Lariviere sent the committee and each member of the legislature [a letter amplifying important points about the New Partnership.](#)

## **Tuition Equity**

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been accepted to an Oregon University System institution, regardless of documentation status.

A joint letter in support of the bill was submitted by University of Oregon President Richard Lariviere, Oregon State University President Ed Ray, and Portland State University President Wim Wiewel to the Senate Education Committee. The letter stated, “Higher education is an investment in the civic, social, and economic health of Oregon and our institutions play a vital role in Oregon’s economic development and social progress. SB 742 will enable us to provide access to an affordable quality education to *all* qualified Oregon high school graduates.”

At the State Board of Higher Education meeting held on Friday, March 4 the State Board of Higher Education passed a resolution in support of the “letter and spirit” of SB 742. The bill is also supported by the Oregon Student Association.