



Public and Government Affairs Update



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STATE RELATIONS

Ways and Means Committee considers university system budget this week

The Education Subcommittee of the Oregon House Joint Ways and Means Committee will begin consideration of the Oregon University System operating budget for 2011-13 on Tuesday March 29. Over five days of hearings, the subcommittee will hear from university presidents, policy experts, faculty, alumni, and industry leaders.

Topics for discussion during these hearings will include affordability and access, educational quality and delivery, the

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Students beautify campus neighborhoods

On April 9, approximately 60 UO students will volunteer their time and effort to complete service projects in three campus neighborhood parks. The event is organized by the Office of Government and Community Relations, the Student Alumni Association and the Holden Leadership Center's Service Learning Program in cooperation with the City of Eugene and Fairmount, South University and West University neighborhood associations.

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FEDERAL RELATIONS

Second continuing resolution passed

The Congress has approved, and the President has signed, a three-week continuing resolution (CR) that will sustain FY11 federal funding through April 8. This sixth FY11 CR includes an additional \$6 billion in cuts from current spending levels. The U.S. House approved the bill on March 15 by a vote of 271 to 158; the U.S. Senate approved the measure on March 17 by a vote of 87 to 13. The short-term bill was needed to sustain government funding after the current CR was to expire on Friday, March 18.

There is growing opposition to any further short-term CRs: rank-and-file lawmakers in

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For more information about this newsletter, please contact Jared Mason-Gere at (541) 346-5381 or 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. We can help!

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STATE RELATIONS

Senate committee considers improved campus public safety

On March 24, senior university administrators participated in a hearing on Senate Bill 405. The bill would enable the UO’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) to transition to a police department with fully sworn and trained police officers.

Testimony at the hearing was offered by University of Oregon Senior Vice President and Provost James Bean, Chief and Executive Director of UO DPS Doug Tripp, and UO Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Paul Shang as well Lane County District Attorney Alex Gardner, Eugene Police Chief Pete Kerns, campus neighborhood leaders, and students.

Provost Bean spoke of the need for a campus police department, citing the unique campus community that DPS currently serves. DPS Chief Tripp shared how creating sworn police officers would help DPS serve its mission of creating a safe environment for Oregon students, and Dean Shang emphasized the need to create a police force aligned with the unique character of UO campus.

Oregon is the exception to the rule when it comes to sworn campus police forces. Ninety-eight percent of campuses the size of the University of Oregon have their own sworn police forces. Of the schools in the newly formed Pac-12, only the UO and Oregon State University do not have a sworn force. Thirty-two of the thirty-three public universities affiliated with the Association of American Universities (AAU) maintain their own police departments. The UO is the only exception.

SB 405 is under consideration by the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is chaired

by State Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-South Lane and North Douglas Counties). The

bill is expected to be scheduled for a work session where the committee could forward it out with a “do pass” recommendation for consideration by the full Senate within the next few weeks.

FEDERAL RELATIONS

ETIC takes it to the Capitol

University of Oregon faculty traveled to Salem earlier this month to support the work of the Oregon Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC). Founded ten years ago through the cooperation of the Oregon hi-tech industry, Oregon universities, and the Oregon Legislature, ETIC aims to create world-class engineering and computer science programs in the state, and continues to connect industry with academic leaders in the Oregon University System.

The purpose of the lobby day was to highlight ETIC’s successes and ask legislators to maintain ETIC funding levels in these tough financial times.

The UO has used ETIC funds as one-time investments to build a unique public-private partnership with Oregon industry clusters, creating the UO Material Science Institute’s Graduate Internship Program attracting outstanding young scholars to Oregon, and building outreach programs to the K-12 and community college communities. Created with ETIC funding in 1998, this program has grown to 50+ students per year, over 98% of which get 9-month internships and over 90% of which get permanent job offers from their internship company, helping expand Oregon’s high-end skilled workforce.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

6th/7th Avenue option emerges as preferred EmX route

On March 15, the Eugene City Council narrowly voted to approve the construction of a rapid-transit bus line in west Eugene. Mayor Kitty Piercy cast the decisive vote in favor of expanding EmX service to west Eugene, breaking a 4-4 tie on the City Council.

In a subsequent vote, the council voted unanimously to select 6th and 7th avenues as the route to run the buses from downtown to West 11th Avenue.

On March 16, the Lane Transit District (LTD) board voted 6-1 to approve the city's proposed sixth and seventh street route, despite a higher operating cost.

Due to the City Council's vote, the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), a panel of local elected officials, decided to postpone its own vote on the project until its April 14 meeting. The MPC will hold a public hearing on April 5 at 6:00 pm at the Lane Events Center Wheeler Pavilion.

LTD had three alternatives under consideration including a route along West 11th and 13th Avenues, 6th and 7th and a no build alternative.

The Council's vote to move the route to 6th and 7th avenues has implications for the future and costs of the project. LTD has said the 6th/7th option would cost \$10 million more to build and \$500,000-plus more to operate a year than the West 13th option.

The university supports the extension of EmX bus services. University students, faculty, and staff take advantage of LTD's existing service, and an EmX extension to West Eugene will provide the University's mostly residential students with greater access to businesses in West Eugene.

Continuing Resolution

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both parties said they will not support another stopgap funding bill. Further, Senate Republican leaders have vowed to resist any further short-term spending measure after this one that does not include defense funding for the rest of FY11.

National Journal Daily reports that congressional leaders believe they need to reach agreement on the longer term FY11 CR by the end of March in order to give both chambers time to move the package before the two-week Easter recess, which begins on April 18.



Ways and Means

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impact of Oregon universities on the state's knowledge economy, fiscal stewardship, and capital budgets, among others. This discussion of higher education budgets is particularly important as the legislature debates ways to reform Oregon's state universities.

The Committee will also hear from the public during the Thursday, March 31 hearing. This 90-minute session will not be the only opportunity for higher education advocates to voice their opinions. The Full Ways and Means Committee is expected to hold a series of public hearings around Oregon on the entire state budget once the co-chairs issue their own budget proposal.

Day of Service

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At Hendricks Park, students will remove invasive species and perform park maintenance. At University Park, volunteers will remove a hedge and provide other landscaping maintenance.

The efforts of students at West University Park will coincide with the City of Eugene's annual Arbor Day and Tree City USA Award ceremony, at which the City of Eugene will be honored with its 32nd consecutive Tree City USA Award.

Student volunteers will join Vice President for Student Affairs Robin Holmes, Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy, and representatives from the City of Eugene, the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Eugene Tree Foundation for a short ceremony and the planting of trees in and near the park.

City of Eugene Parks and Open Space staff has recruited Beta Alpha Psi, the UO accounting service fraternity, to adopt West University Park as an ongoing service project. More than 20 members will be involved with Day of Service festivities.