



Public and Government Affairs Update



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Issue No. 62

STATE RELATIONS

UO Day at the Capitol draws supporters; calls for ed reform

On June 9, University of Oregon students, alumni, and supporters participated in UO Day at the Capitol. Over sixty UO advocates traveled to Salem to meet with policy makers, celebrate the university's contributions to the state, and advocate for important reforms to Oregon's system of higher education.

After a welcome by UO President Richard Lariviere, volunteer advocates heard about current efforts to restructure higher education in the state from Nancy Golden,

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STATE RELATIONS

Oregon House passes campus policing bill

Senate Bill 405, enabling campus public safety departments to transition to sworn, fully trained police agencies, passed the Oregon House this morning, June 14.

Carried on the floor by State Representative Jeff Barker (D-Aloha), the bill passed with support from Democrats and Republicans on a 48-12 vote.

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FEDERAL RELATIONS

Wyden and Merkley support NIH and Pell Grant funding

Oregon Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) signed letters urging support of funding for Pell Grants and research programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) budget. In separate letters, members of the Senate called for the maintenance of funding for the maximum Pell Grant award of \$5,500 a year and a strong commitment to NIH funding.

Funding for Pell grants constituted one of the main areas of debate during the protracted Fiscal Year 2011 (FY2011) budget debate, but the program came out largely with maximum Pell Grant funding maintained at the current level. The Administration's FY 2012 budget

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STATE RELATIONS

Higher ed reform measures move forward with UO support

Higher education reform in Oregon moved one step closer to reality last week, as the Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee passed Senate Bill 242 on June 8. SB 242 would end the Oregon University System's (OUS) status as a state agency and give the system more autonomy to manage programs and set and spend tuition. The bill would also allow universities to keep the interest earned from tuition dollars—funds that presently go to the state's general fund. OUS is expected to gain approximately \$7 million this biennium, which would be divided among OUS institutions based upon student need.

SB 242 was the product of the legislative interim Higher Education Task Force chaired by State Sen. Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), an alumnus of the UO's School of Journalism and Communication.

Meanwhile, SB 909, the education reform initiative introduced by Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, remains in the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee. Two public hearings have been held on the bill, but it is still awaiting a committee vote. SB 909 would create a unified board to oversee all public education from pre-kindergarten to college, and allow for the alignment of standards in Oregon education.

The University of Oregon strongly supports both SB 909 and SB 242 as important first steps in reforming Oregon's system of higher education, and the 2011 UO Day at the Capitol was devoted to requesting passage of both bills this 2011 session.

FEDERAL RELATIONS

UO, Nation of Gabon form groundbreaking relationship

University of Oregon President Richard Lariviere travelled to Washington, D.C. on June 10 to meet with Gabon President Ali Bongo Ondimba at Blair House and enter into a groundbreaking research and training partnership with the west-central African nation.

The agreement will result in creation of the Gabon-Oregon Transnational Research Center on Environment and Development, jointly headquartered in Eugene and the Gabonese capital of Libreville. It was established as part of the UO's [Global Oregon Initiative](#), an internationalization effort that was selected as one of five "Big Ideas" to define university-wide priorities for interdisciplinary research and teaching.

The UO-led, five-campus Oregon African Studies Consortium also draws from academic experts at Oregon State University, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland State University and Willamette University.

The arrangement will create opportunities for students from the five Oregon universities to engage in study-abroad, internship and research programs in Gabon, and for Gabonese students to study in Oregon.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

UO to house PCUN papers

On June 6, The University of Oregon entered into a new partnership with PCUN-Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (in English, the Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) to preserve and make available for research a collection of historic documents that chronicle the labor union.

The Latino farm workers' union PCU, which was established in 1985 by 80 farm workers has grown to a membership of more than 5,000 members. The organization donated all of its historic documents, including those that led to the group's formation, to the UO Libraries special collections and university archives units. The library has agreed to preserve, organize and make the papers available for research projects.

The celebration of this collaboration included remarks by UO President Richard Lariviere and PCUN President Ramon Ramirez, as well as representatives of other Latino groups and local dignitaries. The event was attended by Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo, Lane County Commissioners Pete Sorensen and Rob Handy, and Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy.

PCUN is Oregon's oldest and largest Latino union. The organization was founded by Cipriano Ferrel, who graduated from Mount Angel's Colegio Cesar Chavez - the nation's first accredited, independent four-year Chicano college, which closed in 1983.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community turns out for grand opening of Ford Alumni Center

A variety of community, business, and elected leaders were on hand Friday June 10 for a ribbon-cutting and celebration of the University of Oregon's newest landmark: the Cheryl Ramberg Ford and Allyn Ford Alumni Center.

The building features an interpretive center filled with UO history, and an energy-efficient design expected to yield a LEED Gold certification for sustainability. It offers office and meeting room space for the UO Foundation, the UO Alumni Association, student orientation services and development staff.



Governor's office and congressional staff join alumni for the opening of the Ford Alumni Center

Fred Poust, the current President of the UO Alumni Association, served as the master of ceremonies and the event included remarks by the UO's Vice President for Enrollment management, Roger Thompson as well

as the center's namesakes and major donors, Allyn Ford and Cheryl Ramberg Ford.

In attendance were representatives from the offices of US Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-OR). Nancy Golden, Governor John Kitzhaber's Education Policy Director, also attended the event.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Ducks lead Portland Rose Festival parade

The Oregon Ducks football team served as the Grand Marshal for the 2011 Spirit Mountain Casino Grand Floral Parade in Portland on June 11.

UO President Richard Lariviere, Senior Vice President and Provost James Bean, members of the UO football team, and UO cheerleaders represented the university during the parade. The Oregon Duck also joined in the festivities.

UO supporters and staff were joined at a viewing party in the White Stag building by State Representative Tobias Read (D-Beaverton) and former State Senator Ryan Deckert, a UO alumnus.

Public and Government Affairs thanks longtime administrators

This month marks the departure from the UO of two veteran university administrators who regularly contribute to and lead the university’s engagement with policy makers. Rich Linton, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School and Elizabeth Bickford, Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships, leave the university having each served for more than a decade.

Linton has been chiefly responsible for representing the university’s research agenda to Oregon policy makers and business leaders. Bickford has regularly presided over forums with members of Oregon’s congressional delegation and recipients of student aid. The Office of Public and Government Affairs thanks Linton and Bickford for their years of service.

Nathanael Stice joins GCR as summer policy and communications analyst

Nathanael Stice joined the Government and Community Relations (GCR) team as a part-time, temporary Policy and Communication Analyst. Stice previously served in the GCR office as a graduate intern, assisting with advocacy efforts around the New Partnership and other state and federal university priorities. He is a recent graduate of the University of Oregon’s Master of Public Administration program and plans to pursue a career in public policy and communications. Before joining GCR’s team, Stice directed a field office for a national political campaign, was a congressional intern, and held a Junior Fellowship at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Nathanael will focus on policy analysis and document preparation on a limited-time basis and will continue to be a major contributor to the PGA Update newsletter throughout the summer.

SB 405

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The floor passage comes after the bill passed through the House Judiciary Committee with a “do pass” recommendation on a 7-3 vote.

The bill passed the Oregon Senate on April 18 on a 19-11 vote and will now go to the desk of Governor John Kitzhaber for his signature.

Once the bill receives final approval, the UO Department of Public Safety will begin to transition to a sworn police agency over a six year period.



UO Day

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Governor John Kitzhaber’s Education Policy Director. Groups of advocates met individually with Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, State Treasurer Ted Wheeler, twenty members of the Oregon Senate, and thirty-five members of the Oregon House of Representatives.



The Oregon Duck enters the Governor’s office

Advocates highlighted the importance of continued efforts to ensure affordability and access for Oregon students, asking legislators to pass two key reform initiatives before the end of the current session:

Senate Bill 909, which would create a zero-20 Oregon Education Investment Board, and Senate Bill 242, which would provide greater autonomy to the Oregon University System. They also

encouraged policymakers to enact the UO’s New Partnership proposal in the 2012 February legislative session.

The festive day included performances by On the Rocks, UO’s acclaimed a cappella group in the Capitol Rotunda and in both the House and Senate chambers, and a Senate invocation by Reverend Warren Light from the Wesley Foundation. Other features were a midday reception hosted by President Lariviere that featured remarks by Governor Kitzhaber, pictures with the UO Duck, and UO-themed Voodoo Doughnuts. Exhibits from various UO departments remained on display throughout the day in the Capitol Galleria.

Pell, NIH

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proposal also keeps Pell Grant funding at current levels. However, in April, Budget Committee Chairman Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI) introduced a draft budget that would return Pell Grants to their pre-stimulus level of about \$4,705. It would also eliminate eligibility for less-than-half-time students and reduce the number of semesters eligible students can receive aid. Signers of the Pell Grant “Dear Colleague” letter pointed to the need to provide pathways to college for lower income families and provide a continuing stream of human capital for the US economy.

NIH, meanwhile, took a \$321 million cut in the 2011 budget process, and while the budget proposed by Congressman Ryan does not address specific funding for NIH research, many fear that NIH will face much bigger cuts in FY2012 as some lawmakers seek \$18 billion in cuts to a spending measure for the departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education. The NIH “Dear Colleague” letter reminded other legislators of the importance of research funding to the national economy and of the accomplishments of NIH.

Thirty-eight senators signed the letter in support of NIH funding, and twenty-eight members signed the letter in support of Pell Grant funding. The University of Oregon strongly supports funding for Pell Grants at the \$5,500 level and robust funding for NIH.