



Legislative Session Update March 2015

HECC's Policy Bills

All of the agency's policy bills have had public hearings. Four of the bills have passed out of committee:

- **House Bill 2408** passed unanimously off the House Floor and is now awaiting referral to a Senate Committee. This is a significant bill for the agency. It makes technical changes to statute that formalize the merger of CCWD and the HECC.
- **House Bill 2409** passed unanimously out of the House Higher Education Committee and has been referred to the Joint Ways & Means Committee. This is a technical bill that cleans up OSAC statutes.
- **House Bill 2410**, that would permit community colleges to offer non-credit training certificates, passed out of the House Higher Education Committee unanimously.
- **Senate Bill 219** received nearly unanimous approval on the Senate Floor, there was one vote opposing passage, and is awaiting referral to a House Committee. This bill changes the quorum requirements for HECC Commission action and specifies that appropriations for public universities and OSHU will come to the HECC.
- **Senate Bill 218**, revising the fees for the Office of Private Postsecondary Education, received a hearing. An amendment has been submitted and we expect this will receive approval from the Senate Education Committee.

The HECC's highest priority bill, **House Bill 2407**, received a hearing in the House Higher Education Committee. This bill would implement changes to the Oregon Opportunity Grant in order to effectively promote affordability as endorsed by the Commission. This concept is highlighted in our legislative messaging and we anticipate that a hearing will be on the bill as amended soon. Executive Director Cannon and Deputy Director Richardson have met with individual members of the Committee who have been receptive to the Commission's approach.

HECC's Budget

The HECC's agency budget presentation is scheduled to be before the Joint Ways & Means Education Subcommittee beginning the week of March 16th through early April. The presentation will include a holistic view of state funding for postsecondary education including participation by the public universities, the community colleges, OHSU, and all of the offices within the HECC agency.

March 5, 2015

Revenue Forecast

The most recent quarterly revenue forecast was delivered on February 19th. The revised forecast indicates that Oregon's economy will provide more in income taxes and Lottery receipts than was projected last December. However, it is likely that the personal and corporate kickers will "kick" which will blunt the revenue gains. A net loss of \$21M is projected after kicker refunds are disbursed.

Additional Legislative Activity

Mr. Cannon participated in a presentation on the P-20 Education Budget for the Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways & Means Committee with Nancy Golden and other agency directors.

A work group on Senate Bill 215, that would extend the sunset on the Oregon Education Investment Board, has been formed. Senator Roblan, the Senate Education Committee Chair, is directing the group. They have met twice. Tim Nesbitt and Ms. Richardson are participating as are a number of K-12 stakeholders, business interests, OCCA, and two public universities.

There are several other issues being discussed in the Legislature that HECC staff is actively engaged in. These include textbook costs, specifically expanding access to Open Education Resources; smoothing transitions from high school to postsecondary education and within postsecondary education; institutional contracts for student financial aid services; requiring low-cost or fixed-cost degree options; staffing ratios at colleges and universities; and university shared services.