



Legislative Session Update April 2015

The deadline for posting any bill that will receive a Work Session in its chamber of origin is Friday, April 10th. After this date, bills that are not scheduled on an agenda with Work Session will be considered “dead”. Although there are a number of ways to revive “dead” bills, it can safely be said that the path to passage for these bills would be challenging.

HECC's Policy Bills

All of the agency's policy bills are still alive and have passed out of their initial committee.

Two bills are currently in the Senate Education Committee:

- **House Bill 2408** which is a significant bill for the agency as it would make statutory changes to formalize the merger of the Community Colleges and Workforce Development Department and the HECC.
- **House Bill 2410** that would permit community colleges to offer non-credit training certificates.

One bill has been referred to the House Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development Committee:

- **Senate Bill 219** that would change the quorum requirements for HECC Commission action and specify that appropriations for public universities and the Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) will come to the HECC.

The three other agency bills have been referred to the Joint Ways and Means Committee, the Legislature's budget committee:

- **House Bill 2407** would implement changes to the Oregon Opportunity Grant in order to promote affordability as endorsed by the Commission. This is the HECC's highest priority bill this Legislative Session. We will request assignment of the bill to a subcommittee of Ways and Means and anticipate that it will receive a public hearing and work session within the next two months.
- **House Bill 2409** is a technical bill that cleans up OSAC statutes that we are hoping will receive a work session within the next month.
- **Senate Bill 218** that would establish updated fees for the Office of Private Postsecondary Education has been flagged as a measure that the agency will need in order to finalize its budget for the coming biennium.

HECC's Budget

The HECC's agency budget presentation to the Education Subcommittee of Joint Ways and Means is nearly three-quarters complete. We have received positive feedback on the presentation and its inclusion of issues that impact universities, community colleges, OHSU and students. In the coming week, we will conclude the presentation of budgetary items that impact the public universities and OHSU and close with a detailed look at the operational budget to support the HECC and each of its offices.

Additional Legislative Activity

The agency presented to the Capital Construction Subcommittee of Ways and Means last week. The presentation included a request to reauthorize capital projects for community colleges, public universities and the Knight Cancer Institute. It also included a request for proposed new capital projects at public universities which was jointly presented by HECC staff and Oregon State University President Ed Ray.

The HECC has been asked to jointly present to the Information Technology (IT) Subcommittee of Joint Ways and Means with staff from the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) and the Department of Education on the IT operating environment within the general education program area. The HECC will participate in that presentation on April 16th.

The Joint Ways and Means Committee also plans to hold a series of public hearings around the state that may be held on different campuses and are typically attended by a variety of postsecondary stakeholders and partners. The tentative schedule is:

Friday, April 10 - La Grande at Eastern Oregon University – 5:30-7 PM

Saturday, April 11 - Boardman at Port of Morrow – 12:30-2 PM

Tuesday, April 14 - Lincoln City at Lincoln City Cultural Center – 6:30-8 PM

Thursday, April 16 - Gresham at Mount Hood Community College – 7-8:30 PM

Tuesday, April 21 - Portland at PCC Rock Creek Campus – 7-8:30 PM

Thursday, April 23 - Springfield at TBD – 6:30-8 PM

Friday, April 24 - Klamath Falls at OIT – 5:30-7 PM

Saturday, April 25 - Grants Pass at Performing Arts Center Lecture Hall – 12:30-2 PM

As previously reported, Commission Chair Tim Nesbitt and Deputy Director Dana Richardson have been participating in a work group on Senate Bill 215 that would extend the sunset on the OEIB. That work group reviewed an amendment earlier this week that is intended to dissolve the current board and recommend that an Executive Order be issued to establish a Transitional Education Advisory Council (Council) that would meet over the coming year and focus on determining how best to advance equity in education in Oregon and ease transitions throughout the P-20 education system. Suggested membership would include a variety of stakeholders as well as members from education agency boards such as the HECC, the State Board of Education, the Early Learning Council, and the Youth Development Council. The OEIB as an agency would continue to exist for the next four years and be renamed as the Office of the Chief Education Officer. It would continue convening and coordinating functions of the current OEIB as well as

continue development of the State Longitudinal Database. Lastly, the current work group would continue to meet to evaluate modifications to the Council and the broader P-20 education governance system.

HECC staff continues to engage in legislative discussions around the following topics: protecting student tuition payments at private, non-exempt, regulated institutions and out-of-state institutions operating in this state; textbook costs, specifically expanding access to Open Education Resources; smoothing transitions from high school to postsecondary education and within postsecondary education; sexual assault on postsecondary campuses; requiring low-cost or fixed-cost degree options; staffing ratios at colleges and universities; the “Rooney Rule”; accelerated credit and “5th year” programs; and Career and Technical Education.