

Docket Item:

February Legislative Update

Summary:

Short Legislative Session Begins

The legislature convened for its brief even-year legislative session on Monday, February 3. During the even-years, the session must adjourn within 35 calendar days. The brevity of the session does not discourage legislators from introducing bills on any topic, and while the number of bills that can be introduced by legislators and committees is limited by session rules, the lack of limitation by topic ensures the agency has plenty of proposals on which to engage. Unlike the long session, the agency does not sponsor any major bills or policy initiatives.

Today is the deadline for bills in the policy committees (excluding the Ways and Means, Revenue, and Rules committees) to receive a vote in the committee of their chamber of introduction. At the conclusion of today, any bill that has not received a vote out of committee, either to a deadline exempt committee or to the floor, is not eligible for further consideration. Of course, the policy elements of the bill can live on through amendment into a bill that has a relating clause that covers those policy elements. While this is possible, at the end of the day, there will be clarity regarding the majority of issues that will continue to be ripe for consideration this session.

Tracked Bills

Despite the very quick pace and short timelines of the 2020 legislative session, it may turn into a more substantial legislative session for higher education policy than the prior long-session in 2019. Staff is tracking a number of items that would make significant changes to higher education policy, and that carry the potential for significant cost. The following is an incomplete list of bills we are tracking with interest:

HB 4055 (Food and Housing Insecurity) - This bill requires HECC to study the prevalence of food and housing insecurity amongst public institution students and recommend policies to ameliorate the issues faced by students.

STATUS: Passed House Education, referred to Joint Ways and Means

HB 4056 (Community College Boundary Change) - Approves the Commission order to realign the COCC and KCC Service District boundaries and makes technical changes to statutes to facilitate the smooth transition.

STATUS: Passed House Education

HB 4057 (College Sports Betting) - Currently, the bill bans the Oregon Lottery from offering games based on the outcomes of collegiate sports. However, a potential amendment may be introduced to allow such games and direct a portion of the proceeds to the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

STATUS: Passed House Business and Labor

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HB 4099 (In-state Tuition for COFA Students) - Requires institutions to allow students from certain pacific island countries party to the federal Compact of Free Association to attend at in-state tuition rates and opens financial aid eligibility to such students.

STATUS: Passed House Education, referred to Joint Ways and Means

HB 4128 (Multiple Measures) - Prohibits institutions from placing students into developmental education coursework unless such determination was made using multiple measures and a placement test was not the primary measure.

STATUS: Passed House Education, referred to Joint Ways and Means

HB 4160 (Task Force on Underrepresented Students) - The bill establishes a task force modeled after the legislative Joint Committee on Student Success to tour the state and examine issues of student success for underrepresented students in higher education, defined very broadly. Though HECC does not have a formal role in the task force, we expect to partner with the task force as they work through policy recommendations.

STATUS: Passed House Education, referred to Joint Ways and Means

SB 1521 (Higher Education Omnibus) - This bill addresses multiple topics. It emphasizes the importance of minimizing variance in the major transfer maps being developed pursuant to HB 2998, strengthens research requirements related to transfer, and requires the Commission to plan for communicating transfer maps to students and smoothing the articulation process. Additionally, the bill requires HECC to convene stakeholders to discuss accelerated learning, provides HECC the ability to use Oregon Opportunity Grant funds if necessary to award grants to the dependents of deceased or disabled public safety officers, and authorizes HECC to approve professional doctorate degree programs at regional public universities.

STATUS: Passed Senate Education, referred to Joint Ways and Means

SB 1544 (State regulation of 90/10) - The federal government requires institutions that receive Title IV funds to receive at least 10% of tuition revenue from non-Title IV sources. However, the federal regulation allows institutions to count federal veterans' education aid amongst the 10% total. The bill extends this requirement to institutions as a condition of licensure, and closes the loophole that allows institutions to discount federal veterans' education aid.

STATUS: Work Session Scheduled for 2/13

2021 Policy Development

The executive team met last week to take an initial look at legislative concept proposals for the 2021 legislative session. Comments from that meeting will be distributed back to staff to guide further development and engagement with stakeholders. After the 2020 legislative session, and throughout the year, I will provide the Commission with updates on concepts as they take shape.

In addition to the agency development process, the Governor's office is convening a series of workgroups comprised of agency staff from across the enterprise to discuss potential large-scale initiatives to be sponsored by the Governor in her next budget. HECC participates on the Affordability and Vulnerable Populations workgroup, as well as the Building a More

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Equitable Oregon workgroup. The first group will meet over the late winter and early spring to attempt to shape initiatives to address issues of affordability for Oregonians through the middle class, for whom housing, healthcare, and education represent considerable cost challenges. The second will meet to craft policies to ensure that the needs of underrepresented Oregonians are being addressed in all aspects of society.

Staff Recommendation:

No action is required.