



Legislative Bulletin

In This Issue:

News.....Pg 1
Bills of Interest.....Pg 2
Revenue BillsPg 3
OUS Contacts.....Pg 4
Bills Scheduled.....Pg 5

Around The Capitol:

February 22, 2007

- **OSA rally
(Capitol steps)
12- 1:00pm**

March 5, 2007

- **ETIC Day at the
Capitol**

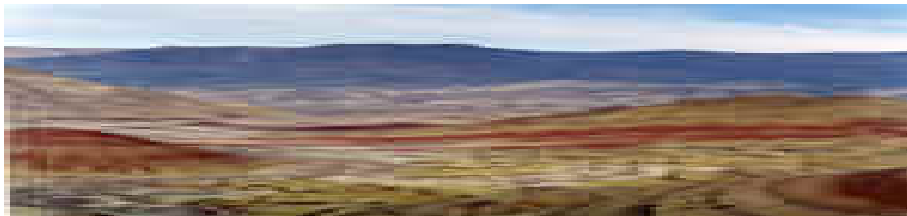
Committees on the Road:

February 21, 2007

- **JointWays &
Means Education
Subcommittee @
PORTLAND
STATE
UNIVERSITY
4:30 – 7:00 pm
2nd Floor Urban
Center**

February 23, 2007

- **Senate Education
Committee @
SOUTHERN
OREGON
UNIVERSITY
1:30 - 4:30 pm
Hannon Library**



OUS Regional Universities make presentation to House Higher Education Subcommittee

On Monday, February 12, Presidents Dow (OIT), Cullinan (SOU), Fatemi (EOU) and Minahan (WOU) and Chief Executive Officer and Vice Provost Jay Casbon (OSU-Cascades) presented an overview of their respective campuses to the House Higher Education Subcommittee.

Chancellor George Pernsteiner opened the hearing by providing a general overview of the profile of a regional university. He stated that students at the smaller OUS institutions are primarily first generation students, meaning they are the first in their families to attend college, a large percentage of the students are also receiving need-based financial aid and are also primarily Oregon residents. OUS regional universities have a smaller proportion of out of state students and, combined, those elements leave the regional universities heavily dependent on state general fund support.

State Senator Ben Westlund, (D-Tumalo) addressed the subcommittee outlining the needs of the Central Oregon region and the initiatives proposed and underway to address those needs. Senator Westlund applauded the leadership of the State Board of Higher Education, Chancellor Pernsteiner, and Vice Provost Jay Casbon in meeting the educational and vocational needs of Central Oregon.

Jay Casbon, Vice Provost, OSU-Cascades described the demographics of Central Oregon which are influencing the pursuit of baccalaureate degree programs and a solid viable university campus in that region. The strategic plan of the OSU Cascades Campus is to build academic excellence to support social and economic vitality in the Central Oregon region; enhance the student

experience and campus environment to increase opportunities for learning, personal growth and service; and, secure resources to sustain and expand core and “signature” academic programs identified as regional priorities.

President John Minahan described Western Oregon University in Monmouth as an institution offering undergraduate programs in Natural Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts. Minahan further provided a profile of WOU students with over 90% being Oregonians, one-half being first generation students and over 30% coming from families with a median family income (MFI) of less than \$30,000. WOU’s enrollment comprises a third from the Portland metropolitan area, a third from the mid-Willamette valley and a third from other counties in Oregon. Minahan noted that access for Oregonians is truly provided at Western.

Minahan further described Western’s “Tuition Promise”, a proposal to raise WOU tuition to the OUS system average and then to hold tuition charges at that level for each entering freshman class of Oregonians for four years. Subsequent tuition increases for each new freshman class cohort will be indexed to increases in the MFI. Exempted from this tuition plan are graduate students, out of state and international student tuition and fees. For more information on “The Western Tuition Promise”, go to http://www.wou.edu/student/admissions/tuition_guarantee.php.

Continued – page 2

Bills of Interest:

SB582

Senate Bill 582: Sponsored by a number of senators and representatives, at the request of Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, would allow public universities to direct their affiliated foundation to administer a university venture development fund. It allows the university or foundation to charge an administrative assessment to manage the fund. The bill would modify and income tax credit for taxpayers that contribute moneys to university venture development funds. The bill applies that modification to the tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2007.

HB 2578

House Bill 2578: Specifies the percentage of undergraduate courses to be taught by full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty at public institutions of higher education. It directs the public institutions of higher education to determine salary standards for part-time and adjunct faculty based on the salary of tenured and tenure-track faculty. It directs that part-time and adjunct faculty are eligible for certain benefits and that they receive preferential consideration for attaining tenure-track positions.

Additionally the bill establishes the Oregon University System Faculty Restoration and Equity Fund. It continuously appropriates moneys in each fund to the Department of Higher Education or the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development for distribution to the public institutions of higher education.

HB2579

House Bill 2579: Sponsored by a number of representatives and senators at the request of the American Federation of Teachers – Oregon, the bill increases the number of directors appointed to the State Board of Higher Education. It reapportions the representation of faculty at public institutions of higher education between two members. The bill specifies that one member be a member of the faculty at Oregon State University, Portland State University or the University of Oregon, while the other member be on the faculty at Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Southern Oregon University or Western Oregon University.

**OUS Regional Universities presentation
House Higher Education Subcommittee, cont'd**

President Khosrow Fatemi, Eastern Oregon University (EOU) discussed the goals, strengths and challenges at EOU. Fatemi featured EOU as having a nationally recognized distance education program, successful academic partnerships, active community and regional engagement, high student satisfaction rates and an engaged faculty. Fatemi also acknowledged that the goal of “providing affordable access to quality higher education for the students of eastern Oregon” can be a challenge when EOU’s service region extends throughout the expansive region of eastern Oregon. Additional challenges are a declining percentage of adults with a college degree, fewer high school graduates attending college and a growing number of college-educated adults leaving the area.

Fatemi outlined EOU’s strategies to deal with these challenges: Expanded high school outreach extending to lower and middle school-age children, promoting college education, expanding community college collaboration, providing summer institutes that expose middle and high school students to college programs and increased scholarships and financial aid.

President Mary Cullinan, Southern Oregon University then addressed the subcommittee with a focus on the students and programs at Southern Oregon University. Cullinan provided an overview of the student make-up of the university: approximately 5,000 students, with 57% women and 43% men and 10.5% ethnic minorities. Cullinan then touched on current partnerships and collaborations in the Southern Oregon region listing the partnership with Rogue Community College, the Deer Creek Center for Field Research and Education and the Crater Lake Science and Learning Center as examples, Cullinan briefly discussed the recently

released Provisional Plan for SOU. She stated that the plan is an outline for achieving savings in academic and non-academic areas over the next three years; to align expenditures with revenues and rebuild reserves. For Academic Affairs, the provisional plan is a work in progress that has been and will continue to be informed by internal discussions, and public comments and suggestions.

OIT President Martha Anne Dow’s testimony detailed OIT’s presence as the only public university in the Pacific Northwest serving the needs of technology. She stated that OIT’s vocational origins have evolved to programs in engineering, allied health technologies, management, communication studies and applied sciences. OIT’s enrollment of 2,265 students (2005) at the Klamath Falls campus and 389 at the Portland Metro campus is comprised of mainly resident students, most from south central Oregon counties. Like other regional campuses, OIT students are primarily first-generation students. OIT has contributed successfully to Oregon’s workforce needs through its Center for Health Professions, the Oregon Renewable Energy Center and the GEO-Heat Center. OIT has an outstanding placement rate for its graduates with a 97% placement rate and starting salaries of \$44,000 for the class of 2005. Dow stated that the challenge of a small university with a focused mission in engineering, technology and health is higher than average costs per capita. Further, OIT’s unique programs with specialized, technical equipment requirements carry higher equipment costs. Enrollment has also been a challenge at OIT, Dow added.



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SENATE COMMITTEE
MOVES FORWARD ON
CREATION OF OREGON
RAINY DAY FUND

*Legislation would set up a
May election to redirect
corporate kicker into fund*

On Thursday, February 15, the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee voted to move two bills that will put in motion a plan to ask voters to redirect the corporate kicker and dedicate the revenue to a rainy day fund to be drawn from during economic downturns. **Senate Joint Resolution 3** would refer the question of redirecting the corporate kicker to the voters and **Senate Bill 48** would implement the transfer of the corporate kicker funds to a savings account. The committee voted unanimously to move Senate Bill 48 to the floor where the bill will be carried by Senator Bruce Starr (R-Hillsboro). In addition to corporate kicker revenue, the rainy day fund created by Senate Bill 48 will be filled with a portion of the ending fund balance. Senate Joint Resolution 3, which passed 3-1 in the committee, asks voters to approve permanently diverting the corporate kicker into the rainy day fund to prevent cuts in education, health care and public safety during an economic downturn. The resolution would set the election for May 15, 2007.

Speaker Merkley Presses Healthy Kids Bill

On Wednesday, February 14, House Speaker Jeff Merkley (D-Portland) testified before the House Revenue Committee in support of House Bill 2201, the Healthy Kids bill. The Healthy Kids bill would provide the 117,000 children in Oregon who do not have health insurance with coverage.

Merkley told the committee that House leaders from both parties had spent hours in negotiations over the last 10 days trying to find agreement on the disputed parts of the bill. He said that while the leaders could not come to a full agreement on changes to the bill, some very good ideas surfaced that were worthy of the committee's consideration.

"I had hoped to come here arm-in-arm with the Republican leadership and present a strong set of amendments with broad bipartisan support," Merkley told the committee. **"But although that is not the case, I want to sincerely thank the members from both parties who were willing to sit down and spend so much time trying to make this bill the very best it could be."**

Merkley presented several amendments to the committee that grew out of those negotiations. The amendments will take full advantage of cost-sharing arrangements offered by the federal government, maximize the number of Oregon children covered under the plan, and make health care for families not only more affordable but more accessible.



The amendments offered by Merkley were accepted unanimously. Together they will:

- Reduce the subsidy threshold in the bill from 350 to 300% of the federal poverty level,
- Strengthen residency requirements, and
- Give families in rural areas greater access to health care resources.

"It would be irresponsible for us to leave federal dollars for this program on the table," Merkley said. By reducing the threshold any lower than 300% of the federal poverty level, Oregon would lose matching funds that would otherwise help pay for the program.

The bill will also increase access to health care in rural areas by establishing a 24-Hour Medical Advice Hotline; establish a Healthy Kids information hotline where parents will receive information about health care providers in their communities; and increase access to federally qualified health clinics, safety net clinics, and school based health clinics.

"Our goal here is health care, not insurance," Merkley said. **"Increasing affordability often means very little if that care is not easily accessible."**

"Nothing we will consider this session is more important for families than affordable, accessible health care for all Oregon's children," Merkley said.

The Revenue Committee approved the Healthy Kids bill by a 6-3 vote. The bill will proceed to the Joint Ways and Means Committee for further consideration.

Upcoming Deadlines

February 26: Last day for measure introduction

March 1: Revenue Forecast Released

March 5: Daily Floor Sessions Begin

April 20: Fiscal Impact Statements due for bills coming out of 1st chamber

April 30: Last day for work sessions for bills in 1st chamber.



**Hearings Scheduled on Shared Responsibility Model
Senate Bill 334**

SB 334, introduced by Senator Kurt Schrader (D-Canby) on behalf of Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski, is scheduled for public hearings on Tuesday February 20 8:15 a.m. in the Senate Education Committee and again on Friday, February 23 at 1:30 p.m. before a joint meeting of the Senate Education Committee and the House Education Committee at Southern Oregon University.

The bill changes the Oregon Opportunity Grant to the “Oregon Shared Responsibility Opportunity Grant”. The bill directs the Oregon Student Assistance Commission to base the method of determining the state share of education costs on student share, family share and amount expected from federal government. The bill further changes the method of determining costs of education for purposes of determining amount of grants. If adopted, SB 334, would apply to students who first attend an eligible post-secondary institution on or after July 1, 2008.

WATCH HEARINGS LIVE

What’s on the Channel?

The Oregon Channel provides gavel-to-gavel, unedited television coverage of state government and public affairs including:

- Floor Sessions/Committees
- State Supreme Court hearings
- State agency hearings
- Boards/Commission hearings
- Capitol news conferences and special events
- Other public affairs, civic and cultural programming, provided by partner organizations

How/where can I watch?

The Oregon Channel is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The channel is

broadcast over the airwaves on a digital television channel, and is available on participating cable

systems. [Click here](#) to find the availability of the Oregon Channel in your community.

Who provides the Oregon Channel?

The Oregon Channel is a collaborative effort between Oregon Public Broadcasting, Southern Oregon Public Television, the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon University System, and the Oregon Public Affairs Network.





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OUS LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

The Government Relations office of the Chancellor's Office will be sending you this electronic newsletter about important events of the past week in Salem and things to come in the days ahead. The newsletter will be published every Friday at 4:00 p.m. throughout session. If you wish to suggest items for inclusion or comments on coverage of issues affecting OUS interests at the Legislature, please feel free to e-mail or phone the Salem Government Relations office. (mary_robinson@ous.edu, 503-373-7490).

BILLWATCH AVAILABLE FOR TRACKING

A comprehensive OUS bill tracking system called BillWatch, has been developed to record information about bills affecting the OUS, and to track their progress through the legislative process. BillWatch is designed to be used by members of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, Chancellor's Office staff, campus leadership and OUS advocates. BillWatch is a secure system and users must obtain a user name and password from the Office of Government Relations to use this service.

Subscribing to BillWatch allows users to subscribe and designate particular bills of interest or to provide a broader search of all legislation. A second benefit of subscribing is notification: upon subscribing to a particular bill, users will receive automatic email notification when action is taken on the bill, e.g., hearings scheduled, amendments engrossed, etc. To request access, go to <http://billwatch.ous.edu/>. From there, choose *Request an Account*. Your request should be processed within 24 hours. An electronic users guide is available by clicking on HELP at the BillWatch main login menu.

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