Local Government Relations Update

Portland City Council is currently reviewing amendments to the Central City 2035 Plan, which will be a comprehensive zoning ordinance. Items under consideration include new environmental overlays to zoning maps, further implementing the Willamette Greenway plan, and the Green Loop Concept Report, which could ultimately lead to additional bike lane options for Portlanders commuting by bike to the downtown area and PSU.

On Thursday, March 8, Metro appointed Betty Dominguez to be the new Metro Commissioner for District 2. Prior to her service on the Metro Council, Dominguez served as a housing advocate for Oak Grove. She replaces Carlotta Collette.

Federal Government Relations Update

National Science Foundation Grants (NSF): In February, the NSF implemented a new set of measures intended to combat sexual harassment. The new policies require institutions to work proactively with the NSF on sexual harassment matters and, in some instances, could result in the suspension or elimination of research grants.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): Preliminary injunctions were ordered by two Federal District Court judges requiring the program to be operated on similar terms to those in place before being rescinded by the administration on September 5th, 2017. The Preliminary injunction will allow for applications to be renewed, but does not require any new applications to be considered. The injunction will likely be in place until the matter is considered by the Supreme Court.
State Government Relations Update

The 2018 legislative session adjourned mid-afternoon on Saturday, March 3rd, which was a week ahead of schedule. Below are a few of the key items of interest to higher education that passed during the session. A more extensive Government Relations update can be found here.

Key legislation:

**HB 4053** requires the Chief Education Officer and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to work with public universities to examine and prepare an annual report on accelerated college credit programs in Oregon. The report’s examination will look at race, ethnicity and gender of those receiving transfer credits and identify rates of acceptance by institution. Looking forward to the 2019 legislative session, Government Relations anticipates that accelerated college credits and transfer credits will continue to be a point of emphasis for several legislators.

**HB 4141** creates a more inclusive and transparent tuition process. As passed, the law requires universities to designate a tuition advisory council, which must include at least two faculty, two administrators, two students from student government, and two students from traditionally underserved populations. The council makes a recommendation on tuition to the university president. The president forwards his recommendation to the Board of Trustees with the report from the council and any dissenting reports. If the tuition increase is over five percent those reports are then provided to the HECC.

PSU worked closely with the Oregon Student Association to craft a bill that meets the needs of students and the university. PSU’s process is already transparent and considers the impact of tuition increases on traditionally underserved students. The bill will result in the information provided to the council being more transparent. To that end, the university held two university wide budget forums on Wednesday, March 7 and second forum on Wednesday, March 14. If you were not able to attend either forum, information on the budget process is available here.

**SB 1563** makes it clear that the tuition equity established in 2013 extends to undocumented students. Fundamentally, the legislation will guarantee that any students who lose their DACA protections will continue to receive state financial assistance.

In addition to these three bills, there were at least a dozen other bills that will make small
changes to higher education.

**Capital construction:**

Public universities sought over $80 million in new capital during the 2018 session. Such a significant ask is uncommon, but reflects three projects that were not funded in 2017 – the matching funds for UO’s Knight Center for Accelerating Scientific Impact, the continued expansion of OSU’s Cascade campus in Bend, and a Fieldhouse for EOU.

The legislature approved the following:

- OSU Cascade Campus - $39 million for educational buildings (fully funded)
- UO Center for Innovation - $20 million to match funds (50% reduction from request)
- EOU fieldhouse - $9 million to build new fieldhouse (fully funded)
- SOU boiler - $2.8 million to replace failing boiler (fully funded)

Perhaps most importantly, the legislature included a note in the budget requesting the Higher Education Coordinating Commission take a more critical look at university capital construction requests in the coming biennia. The note asks the HECC to focus on renovation and deferred maintenance.

**Legislative Town Halls**

If you are interested in attending a legislative town hall and showing your support for PSU, consider attending a legislative town hall. A calendar of upcoming town halls can be found [here](#).

**Upcoming Government Relations Meetings**

March 22 - Cong. Earl Blumenauer’s office

May 7 - Legislative Breakfast with the PSU Board of Trustees

May 21 to 23 - Legislative days in Salem