

***USHE Weekly Legislative Report***  
**Third Week: February 10-14, 2014**  
**By David L. Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education**  
February 18, 2014

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This is the third weekly report for 2014 on the legislative session from the perspective of the Utah System of Higher Education, for distribution to Regents, Presidents, and Trustees.

**Overview.** Thanks to all who participated in the Higher Education Legislative Luncheon on February 14. It was well attended by legislators, presidents, regents and trustees. Special thanks to our sponsors, Rocky Mountain Power and Questar.

**2014-2015 Budget.** The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee held its final presentations this week, including informative presentations from the remaining two USHE presidents: University of Utah's David Pershing and Salt Lake Community College's Interim President Denece Huftalin.

The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee took final action prioritizing its budget requests, recommending the same amounts included in the Board of Regents' budget request. The Subcommittee prioritized Acute Equity and Distinctive Mission its top priorities. Other notable high priorities include:

- Performance Based Funding
- USHE Higher Education Technology Initiative
- USHE Regents' Scholarship
- Snow College Rural Superintendents Concurrent Enrollment
- University of Utah Utility Infrastructure
- Utah State University Graduate School and Veterinary Programs
- Dixie State University - University Status
- SLCC Student Access Support and Completion

The subcommittee also recommended that Higher Education employees receive the same compensation increase granted state employees (an amount not yet determined). The Chairs of the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee will present its priorities to the Executive Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, February 19.

**Capital Budget.** The Infrastructure Subcommittee prioritized requests for capital development. The following capital development priorities of the Board of Regents were prioritized by the Subcommittee in the following order:

- Weber State University – New Science Lab Building (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Utah State University - Statewide Instructional Initiative (4<sup>th</sup>)
- University of Utah - Crocker Science Center (9<sup>th</sup>)

**Key Legislation of Interest to USHE**

- **HB 32, College Credit for Veterans\*** by Rep. Tim Cosgrove, modifies legislation passed in the 2013 Legislative session requiring student veterans to meet with a student advisor before the award of credit. New legislation requires USHE institutions to provide written notification to student veterans of the requirement to meet with a college counselor before being eligible to transfer college credit. The bill was endorsed by the Veterans Reintegration Taskforce during the interim and received unanimous support from the House and the Senate.
- **HB 45, In-State Tuition for Military Servicemembers and Veterans** by Rep. Curt Oda, provides ability for military service members, veterans and their immediate family members

to be considered a resident for in-state tuition purposes. The bill unanimously cleared the House and is scheduled for consideration by the Senate Education Committee this week.

- **HB 72, Higher Education Grievance Procedure** by Rep. Mark Wheatley, requires the Board of Regents to enact regulations requiring all testimony pertaining to an employee grievance hearing be given under oath. The bill is currently awaiting consideration by the full House.
- **HB 92 (1<sup>st</sup> Sub), Utah Telehealth and Education Network Amendments** by Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove, combines the functions of the Utah Education Network and the Utah Telehealth Network as well as modifies the board membership of the current Utah Education Network. The substitute bill passed the House Health and Human Services Committee and awaits consideration by the full House.
- **HB 306, Licensure Modifications\*\*** by Rep. Ryan Wilcox, modifies the requirements for obtaining licensure in landscape architecture by removing the requirement for an applicant to have a bachelor's or master's degree, or have completed supervised practical experience. Utah State University currently offers the only program in landscape architecture in the state. USU, together with the Utah Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects are working to oppose this legislation and are in contact with the bill sponsor. The bill is currently awaiting a committee hearing.
- **SB 16, Veterans Tuition Gap Coverage\*** by Sen. Luz Robles, provides state funded grants to qualifying military veterans who have maximized federal financial aid benefits. The bill is currently awaiting a committee hearing.
- **SB 22, Workforce Services Job Listing Amendments**, by Sen. Peter Knudson, requires all government entities advertise job openings on the state website, jobs.utah.gov. It also requires the state's Division of Purchasing to provide contact information for companies that contract with the state. USHE is currently working with the sponsor to amend this legislation to exclude job postings for USHE faculty and student-related positions. The bill is currently awaiting a committee hearing.
- **SB 34, Governance of the Utah Education and Workforce Alliance** by Sen. Howard Stephenson, establishes a multi-agency governing board for the Utah Futures and Utah Data Alliance initiatives, to be administered by the Utah Education Network. The bill was heard initially by the Senate Education Committee but was held by the bill sponsor for possible amendments to address concerns related to the proposed governance and data security.
- **SB 38 (1<sup>st</sup> Sub), Snow College Concurrent Education Program\*** by Sen. Ralph Okerlund, Establishes a program that requires Snow College to provide concurrent enrollments courses via interactive video to rural school districts under direction of the Board of. The bill requires Snow College to establish a two-year schedule of course offerings via concurrent enrollment and provide advisory support to secondary school students. The substitute bill passed the full Senate and awaits a House committee hearing.
- **SB 151, Religious Freedom Instruction Requirements** by Sen. Stuart Reid, requires, as part of an award of a bachelor's degree, students must demonstrate reasonable understanding of the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, including religious freedom. The bill is currently awaiting a committee hearing.
- **SB 170, Education Loan Amendments\*\*** by Senator Peter Knudson, modifies the Utah Consumer Code in relation to student loans by defining unconscionable actions of a higher education institutions and lender. USHE currently opposes this legislation and is working with the bill sponsor on modifications. The bill is currently awaiting a committee hearing.

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\* USHE has taken an official position in support; \*\* USHE has taken an official position in opposition.

For more information on legislation, committee agendas, or to view or listen to floor debates, see: <http://le.utah.gov/>