

***USHE Weekly Legislative Report***  
**Fourth Week: February 18-21, 2014**  
By David L. Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education  
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This is the fourth 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.** Some bills received final passage this week by both the House and Senate and await the Governor's signature. Additional bills surfaced relating to higher education including HB 345 and SB 68 (detailed below).

**2014-2015 Budget.** The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee co-chairs presented their budget priorities to the Executive Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, February 19. The Chairs cited specific examples of efficiencies and innovations at USHE institutions, and expressed strong support for the Board's [budget priorities](#). From Senator Urquhart, Senate Co-Chair of the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

“I think you'd all be very proud to have heard the testimony of the presidents. We're having a lot of innovation, a lot of pencil sharpening and a lot of hard work in higher ed. And that's why our plea is: let's make this a big year for higher ed. I think this is the most innovative area of the budget. I think we are having some of the best management anywhere in government. I think that merits some additional attention this year.”

Audio of their entire presentation is available [here](#). No formal action was taken by the committee. The Executive Appropriations Committee will meet again next week and will occur when new revenue projections are announced at the end of this month.

**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, received unanimous support from the House and the Senate and has been enrolled awaiting the signature of the Governor.
- **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 received unanimous support from the House and the Senate and is awaiting final signature of the Speaker to be enrolled.
- **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 unanimously passed the House and awaits a committee hearing by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.
- **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.

- **HB 345, Vending Services Operated by Blind Persons** by Rep. Richard Greenwood, grants the Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired the first right of refusal authority to establish a vending stand or food services enterprise in any public building or on any public property for operation by a blind person, including 4-year higher education institutions. The bill currently awaits 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 hearing in the Senate Education Committee.
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Sub. SB 22, Workforce Services Job Listing Amendments**, by Sen. Peter Knudson, requires 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 job listings of companies that contract with the state. The substitute bill excludes exclude job postings for USHE faculty and student-related positions. The bill unanimously passed the Senate Economic Development and Workforce Services Committee and awaits consideration by the full Senate.
  - **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 was passed the House Education Committee and awaits consideration by the House.
  - **SB 68, Veterans Centers\*** by Sen. Peter Knudson, requires the State Board of Regents to study the feasibility of providing a veterans center or veterans services at each USHE institution and develop a plan for implementing the study of centers or services. The bill unanimously passed the Senate Education Committee and awaits consideration by the full Senate.
  - **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/>