

USHE Weekly Legislative Report
First Week: January 28 – February 1, 2013
By Dave Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education
February 4, 2013

This is the first weekly report for 2013 on the legislative session from the perspective of the Utah System of Higher Education, for distribution to Regents, Presidents, and Trustees. Spencer Jenkins, Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs, assisted with this report.

Overview. The 2013 Session of the Utah State Legislature got underway on Monday, January 28, and will conclude on Thursday, March 14. There will be a number of bills considered impacting the Utah System of Higher Education, all of which will be carefully tracked by the Commissioner's Office and institutions.

Governor Gary Herbert delivered his State of the State address on Wednesday, with an emphasis on prioritizing funding of education at all levels and a strong endorsement of USHE's STEM initiative and the goal of 66% by 2020.

2013-2014 Budget. According to the state's consensus revenue estimates, the state has a surplus from last year and projected revenue growth in the coming year resulting in a total of \$121 million in new one-time funds and \$300 million in new ongoing funds. However, state tax collections may be negatively impacted by recent changes in federal tax policy. An updated revenue estimate will be available in mid-February.

Please Note: The annual Higher Education Legislative Luncheon, sponsored by Rocky Mountain Power and Questar, will be on Friday, March 1st, 12 Noon, State Capitol Rotunda. All Legislators, Regents, Presidents, Trustees and Student Body Presidents are invited. (Please arrive by 11:30.)

The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee met twice, leading out with a presentation on the USHE Budget Priorities as approved by the Board of Regents (available [here](#)). On Friday the Legislative Fiscal Analyst began sharing his recommendations including partially funding the USHE request for Equity but not the Distinctive Mission portion of Mission Based Funding, and endorsing the full request for the 66% STEM initiative. The committee reviewed the efforts of USHE universities and colleges to plan for enrollment impacts from the recent change in the eligibility age of LDS missionaries. While the impacts vary by institution, each is pro-actively taking steps in response. The memo discussed by the Board of Regents on this issue was distributed to the Committee (available [here](#)). USHE Presidents will begin testifying to the subcommittee next week. An unofficial schedule of meetings is online [here](#).

Capital Budget. The Infrastructure Subcommittee heard presentations on state funded building requests on Wednesday from Presidents Scott Wyatt (Snow), Stan Albrecht (Utah State), and Cynthia Bioteau (Salt Lake Community College). On Friday, Commissioner Buhler provided an overview on the Board of Regents' process in prioritizing capital development requests from USHE institutions. Also on Friday, the Subcommittee received presentations from Presidents Matthew Holland (Utah Valley University), Stephen Nadauld (Dixie State College), and Chuck Wight (Weber State University) on capital priorities.

Key Legislation of Interest to USHE

- **HB 28, Campus Safety Amendments** by Rep. Don Ipson, would allow administrative officers at USHE institutions to dismiss individuals that trespass on the property of higher education institutions who disrupt the peace. The bill was passed by the House Education Committee and will likely be considered by the full House this week.
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- **HB 61, Dixie State College – University Status*** by Rep. Don Ipson, This bill changes the name of Dixie State College of Utah to Dixie State University and will affirm the action taken Board of Regents at their last meeting on January 24. The bill is on the House 3rd Reading Calendar and is expected to be voted upon early next week. Upon passage in the House, it will be considered by the Senate.
- **HB 254S1, College Credit for Veterans** by Rep. Paul Ray, requires USHE colleges and universities to award credit for certain military service training and experience. We worked with Rep. Ray to adjust the original proposed legislation so it now requires student veterans to meet with a student advisor before the award of credit. The bill was passed out of the House Education committee unanimously and goes to the full house for consideration.
- **SB 42, Medical School Admissions Funding*** by Sen. John Valentine, authorizes the University of Utah School of Medicine to increase the number of students admitted by 40 students for a total of 122 students annually; and restricts the 40 additional admissions to students who demonstrate a strong connection to Utah. The bill is on the Senate 3rd Reading Calendar and is expected to be passed early this week.
- **SB 51, Higher Education Tuition Waivers*** by Sen. Stephen Urquhart, removes the cap on the number of waivers allotted to institutions of higher education for nonresident students who meet certain academic and admission requirements; and extends alumni legacy nonresident scholarships at institutions of higher education to grandchildren of alumni. This bill will be considered in the Senate Education Committee on Monday.
- **SB 118, Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health Amendments** by Sen. Karen Mayne, directs the Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Utah to create and maintain a website designed for the public to learn about the findings of research studies regarding occupational and environmental health, including research on the health effects of air pollution. The Bill passed the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and is up for consideration by the full Senate.
- **SB 162, Concurrent Enrollment Amendments*** by Sen. Stephen Urquhart, clarifies and modifies several elements of legislation he sponsored, and enacted, last year that were administratively burdensome, based on feedback from USHE. The bill is currently awaiting a committee hearing.
- **SCR 5, Concurrent Resolution Endorsing the Utah Education Excellence Commission*** by Sen. Jerry Stevenson, expresses strong support for achieving the goal that 66% of Utah's adults will hold a postsecondary degree or certificate by the year 2020; expresses the Legislature's determination to work with the Governor and Utah's education stakeholders to achieve the 66% goal through increased innovation and investment, and urges all Utahns to unite behind efforts to achieve the 66% goal. This bill will be considered in the Senate Education Committee on Monday.

* 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/>