

USHE Weekly Legislative Report
Fifth Week: February 25 – March 1, 2013
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This is the fifth 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.

Overview. Regents, Trustees, Presidents and Legislators gathered together for the annual Higher Education luncheon at the Capitol on Friday. Thanks to all who participated.

Revised state tax revenue figures agreed upon by the Governor and legislative leadership were announced this week with a slight decrease in ongoing funds and a slight increase in one-time funds. New estimates indicate an increase in ongoing tax revenue of \$264 mil. and a increase in one-time tax revenue of \$161 mil. A summary is available [here](#).

Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee

The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee held its final meeting this week in which it prioritized its budget requests. **The Subcommittee prioritized Mission-Based Funding (Distinctive Mission and Equity) as its top priority.** Other notable high priorities include:

- 1st year request to expand capacity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) to reach the 66% goal.
- Expansion of capacity at the University of Utah Medical School.
- Implementation of Dixie State College change to University status.
- 1% increase in employee compensation.
- Additional funding to support growth in Regents' and New Century Scholarships.

USHE Capital Development Requests

The Infrastructure and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee also held its final meeting this week and prioritized its requests for capital development. USHE building requests were ranked below several small dollar requests as well as some other state buildings.

The subcommittee voted to change the USHE budget request for utility rate increases at the University of Utah from an ongoing funding request of \$3.9 million to one-time allocation of \$25 million. The subcommittee ranked other projects ahead of all USHE building requests as follows (including priority ranking):

- Dixie State University East Elementary purchase (12)
- USU/CEU Eastern Central Instruction (13)
- UVU Classroom Building (14)
- WSU Science Lab Replacement (16)
- SLCC Classroom & Learning Center (17)
- Snow Science Building Remodel (18)
- USU Biological Sciences (19)
- USU Brigham City (22)

The chairs of both appropriations subcommittees presented the priorities to the Executive Appropriations Committee on Thursday along with all other subcommittee recommendations in preparation for compiling an overall budget this next week. The Executive Appropriations Committee will meet several times this week to compile a complete budget using the information presented to them by the appropriations subcommittees.

Key Legislation of Interest to USHE

- **HB 139, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Action Center** by Val Peterson, creates educational programs for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The bill attempts to enhance STEM education primarily in grades 6, 7, 8 grades by enhancing teacher development, adopting best practices on college readiness, and improved tracking of student progress in core STEM subject areas. The bill passed the full House and is awaiting further consideration in the Senate.
- **HB 340, Snow College Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Advisory Committee*** by Rep. Kay L. McIff, would modify the duties of Technical Education Advisory Committee to assess the economic development needs of central Utah and advise Snow College on how the college can improve the effectiveness of its efforts to assist business, industry, and local government to help expand economic activity. The bill awaits consideration on the House floor.
- **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 passed the full Senate unanimously and is in the House awaiting further consideration.
- **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 passed the House this week and awaits the Governor's signature.
- **SB 100, Higher Education Scholarship Amendments*** by Sen. Jerry Stevenson, makes modifications to the Regents' and New Century scholarship programs to streamline the application process, raise standards to improve completion, and addresses concerns raised by constituents. This bill passed the House this week and awaits the Governor's signature.
- **SB 175, Assessment of College Readiness*** by Sen. Howard Stephenson, requires K-12 school to administer college readiness assessments which include a college admissions test that is most commonly submitted to local universities (e.g. ACT or SAT). USHE supports this bill as it streamlines the assessment of college readiness of high school students and applies a standard assessment statewide. The bill passed the House Education Committee and is up for consideration by the full House.
- **SB 132, Utah Medical Education Council Amendments*** by Sen. Wayne Harper, this bill moves the functions of the Utah Medical Education Council into the Board of Regents as well as expands its scope to nursing professionals. The Council will still maintain its authority through its current board appointed by the Governor, to bridge the gap between public/private health care workforce and education interests. The bill passed the Senate last week and has been assigned to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **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. This bill passed the Senate unanimously and is awaiting further consideration in the House.

* 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/>
Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs Spencer Jenkins contributed to this report.
