



State Affairs - 2021 Update

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State Affairs - 2021 Update

- 2020 Recap
 - Pandemic Response
 - OHA guidelines and COVID-19 protocols
 - UO's community response with testing, contact tracing and vaccine distribution
 - Three Special Sessions
 - Police and public safety reform
 - Budget rebalance, protecting the PUSF
 - Funding for Huestis Hall, ShakeAlert, research vessel at OIMB

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2021 Legislative Priorities

Budget:

\$900 Million Investment in Public University Support Fund & Increased Funding for University State Programs

An increase of \$63 million in the PUSF, totaling \$900 million, for the 2021-23 biennium would help UO ensure that the University can keep tuition for incoming students as low as possible, and minimize cuts across the university.

In addition to funding for the PUSF, UO is also advocating for a 7.4% increase in funding for University State Programs. The programs at the UO include the Labor Education Research Center, the TallWood Design Institute, dispute resolution programs, the Clinical Legal Education program, and signature research centers like the Oregon Nanoscience and Microtechnologies Institute (ONAMI) and the Oregon Translational Research and Development Institute (OTRADI).

Capital - \$58.5 million to fund the heritage renovation project.

The Heritage Project consists of two of the oldest surviving public academic buildings in Oregon and the West, University and Villard halls. These are the founding buildings of the University of Oregon Campus and the birthplace of public higher education in Oregon. They are in great need of renovation for safety and modernization.

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2021 Legislative Priorities

Policy:

Secure Limited Liability Coverage for Public Universities

Include public universities in liability conversations relating to other education providers/sectors, extending the protections of HB 4402, from Special Session 3.

Support Legislative Efforts to Address Basic Needs of Students

Legislators and stakeholders are working hard to address the basic needs of students, including proposals to address textbook affordability, food security, and housing costs. Tuition is only one barrier that students face, and it is imperative that the state partner with universities to help address the full slate of expenses students face as they pursue a degree.

Change Default Retirement Enrollment for Non Classified Employees (LC 2498)

Change the default presumption for new university employees who fail to fill out retirement enrollment paperwork from PERS/OPSRP to the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). This would not impact classified employees, and would not limit employee benefits in any way.

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2021 Policy Issues to Watch

Credit Transfer and Common Course Numbering

Legislators have introduced several bills that would dictate how colleges and universities accept transfer credits and require common course numbering across the state. State affairs, the Provost's office, Senate and IFS are engaged in making sure these bills assist students and preserve institutional autonomy over academic policy.

Pandemic Response

As the saying goes "the devil is in the details." UO is working closely with state agencies and the legislature on the implementation of various federal actions to monitor for any unintended and harmful consequences of actions.

Threats to Institutional Governance Authority

A handful of bills have been introduced that would impact higher education governance in Oregon. Issues range from tuition and fees to the composition of the HECC.

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Other Legislation UO is Supporting

SB 551 / HB 3007

Provides health care benefits for part-time faculty members at public institutions of higher education.

HB 2835

Funds benefits navigator position at Oregon colleges and universities to assist students in determining eligibility and applying for federal, state and local benefits programs.

SB 554

Gives Board of Trustees the authority to further restrict firearms on campus. Also applies to local governments, ports and community colleges.

Looking Ahead – Key Dates

February 24th – quarterly revenue forecast released

March 14th – enhanced federal unemployment benefits expire

Early April – Tri-Chairs budget released, & public hearings on higher education budgets

May 19th – quarterly revenue forecast released

June 27th – constitutional deadline for legislature to adjourn

Looking Ahead

A remote legislative session

Pandemic response and reopening