



Weekly Legislative Update

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NEWS

Senate Budget Released

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The major event during the sixth week of the 2006 session was the release of the Senate supplemental operating and capital budget proposals on Wednesday February 15. Because of an improved revenue forecast (see below), Senate Democrats were able to spend approximately \$100 million more than the \$500 million in Governor Gregoire's budget, while keeping more than \$950 million in reserve to help write the next biennial budget.

UW Operating Budget

The University of Washington received a total of \$5.6 million in additional resources in the Senate supplemental operating budget and \$8.5 million in the supplemental capital budget, a five-fold increase over the amount provided in Governor Gregoire's budget proposal released in December 2005. A summary of individual budget items is provided below.

UW Capital Budget

State Revenue Forecast Increases by \$107 Million

UW Operating Budget

South Lake Union Phase 2 -- The Senate budget provides \$2.4 million for support of operations and maintenance funding for the South Lake Union Phase 2 biomedical research facility. This is the full amount requested by the UW.

Week Six Committee Highlights

Department of Global Health -- \$500,000 is provided to help in the establishment of the University's new Department of Global Health. These funds will be matched with \$20 million recently received from the Gates Foundation. The University originally requested \$2 million.

Preview of Week Seven Activities

Pacific NW Seismic Network -- \$180,000 is included for upgrading the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network within the Department of Earth and Space Sciences. The University had requested \$400,000 for this item.

Bills of Interest to the University

Extraordinary Energy Costs -- \$1.63 million is provided for one-time assistance in dealing with extraordinary natural gas cost increases. The UW requested \$1 million for this item.

UW Tacoma Enrollments -- \$150,000 is provided for 25 additional freshmen enrollments at the UW Tacoma beginning in fall 2006.

Legislatively Directed Enhancements – A total of \$750,000 is included in the Senate budget for three legislatively directed budget enhancements. These include:

- \$500,000 to expand the Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) program.
- \$150,000 for educational programs at the Burke Museum
- \$100,000 for the UW Tacoma Autism Program

UW Capital Budget

Nanotechnology Recruitment – The Senate capital budget provides \$4.5 million to expand the University's current nanotechnology research program to facilitate the recruitment of Dr. Gabriel Aepli from the University of London. Resources are provided to the University by using State Toxics Account funding to pay for some capital projects currently financed with University local funds.

UW Tacoma Land Acquisition – The Senate budget directs the Department of Natural Resources to acquire sufficient university trust lands with common school land replacement funds to pay for the acquisition of land for the UW Tacoma campus. The newly acquired Tacoma campus properties would become part of the university trust lands.

State Revenue Forecast Increases by \$107 Million

The most recent forecast of general fund revenues was adopted by the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council on February 15. Revenues are now estimated to increase by another \$107 million during the 2005-07 biennium. As has been the case for the past 12 months, higher than expected housing permits and construction employment growth are fueling the surge in general fund collections.

Week Six Committee Highlights

On Wednesday February 15, the House Commerce and Labor Committee held a brief work session on the employment of electricians and plumbers in institutions of higher education. Daniel Kraus, UW Labor Relations Specialist was part of a panel of UW, community college and union officials who discussed employment issues related to certification of these trades.

On Thursday February 16, the House Higher Education and Workforce Education Committee held a work session on technology transfer. Lee Huntsman, Executive Director of the Life Sciences Discovery Fund Authority and President Emeritus, provided an update on the Fund's activities along with Dr. Bruce Montgomery, CEO of Corus Inc. and a member of the Life Sciences Board. Malcolm Parks, Associate Vice Provost for Research was joined by Dr. Keith Jones from Washington State University as they provided an update on the implementation of SHB 1806 from the 2005 session which modified provisions of the state ethics act to facilitate an increase in the commercialization of university technology.

Preview of Week Seven Activities

The major event of week seven will be the release of the House of Representatives operating budget on Tuesday February 21. The House Capital Budget is expected to be released at the same time. Public hearings on the proposals are scheduled for Tuesday afternoon February 21 at 3:30 p.m. and Wednesday morning February 22 at 8:00 a.m., respectively.

This is the final week for House and Senate policy committees to consider bills originating in the opposite chamber. On Monday February 20 at 3:30 p.m., the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee will hold a public hearing on E2SHB 2575 which is the Governor's proposal to establish a health technology assessment program for Washington State.

Later that evening, the Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education Committee will hold a confirmation hearing at 5:30 p.m. for UW Regent Herb Simon and student regent Will Rasmussen.

The Washington Learns Higher Education Advisory Committee will hold an all-day work session on Tuesday February 21 at the Tye Center in Tumwater from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

On Thursday February 23, the Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education Committee will hold a public hearing on SHB 3113 which would establish a university center on the campus of Everett Community College as the replacement model for the North Snohomish, Island and Skagit (NSIS) education consortium. At the same hearing, the committee will also take testimony on SHB 2817 which establishes a technology emphasis for institutions of higher education.

Bills of Interest to the University

Health Technology Assessment -- HB 2575 (Cody)

Establishes an evidence-based health technology assessment program.

University Position: Support

Status: Scheduled for public hearing in Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee on February 20.

Requiring Disclosure of Outsourcing -- HB 3160 (Hudgins)

Requires new reporting requirements for state agencies which contract with overseas firms or entities.

University Position: Neutral

Status: House Appropriations Committee

Establishing Technology Priorities for Institutions of Higher Education – SHB 2817 (Sells) and SSB 6697 (Berkey).

Establishes state objectives for access, enrollment, delivery and degree achievements in fields of engineering, technology, biotechnology and other science fields.

University Position: Support but prefer Senate version.

Status: Public hearing on SHB 2817 scheduled in Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education Committee on February 23. Public hearing held on SSB 6697 in House Higher Education and Workforce Education on February 17.

Revising Terms of Appointment of Student Regents and Trustees -- HB 2857 (Kenney)

Modifies the one year term of office for student regents and trustees so that the term begins on June 1 instead of July 1.

University Position: Support

Status: Public hearing on HB 2857 held in Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education Committee on February 17. Scheduled for executive session February 20.

Expanding Access to Higher Education in Everett/Snohomish County Using the University Center Model – HB 3113 (Sells)

Establishes a university center at Everett Community College and expresses legislative intent to provide 250 student FTE to provide baccalaureate education on the campus.

University Position: Neutral

Status: Scheduled for public hearing in Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education committee February 23.

Concerning Cost Savings on Course Materials – SSB 6699 (Pridemore) and SHB 3087 (Ormsby)

Requires universities in collaboration with affiliated bookstores and students and faculty to adopt rules requiring bookstores to permit students to purchase unbundled course materials where possible.

University Position: Neutral

Status: Public hearing held on SSB 6699 in House Higher Education and Workforce Education Committee on February 17. SHB 3087 referred to Senate Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education Committee.