

February 9, 2009

EVERGREEN

The Evergreen State College



Legislative Update

Policymakers Hold Public Hearings on Higher Education Bills; 2009 Supplemental Budget Bills Move Forward

2009 Legislative Session Dates

- January 12- Washington Legislature convenes
- February 25 - Policy Committee Cut Off for Bills from Original House
- March 2- Fiscal Committee Cut Off for Bills from Original House
- March 12- Bills in House of Origin Cut Off
- March 19— State Revenue Forecast Update
- March 30- Policy Committee Cut Off for Bills from Opposite House
- April 6- Fiscal Committee Cut Off for Bills from Opposite House
- April 17 - Bills in Opposite House of Origin Cut Off
- April 26- Legislative Session Ends

The first week in February was dominated by public hearings. Several of the hearings focused on the nearly two-hundred pieces of legislation related to higher education introduced this session.

Early this week the Senate and House took up legislation from the opposite chamber related to the 2009 supplemental budget.

The Senate took up the House Supplemental Budget bill (House Bill 1694) which would reduce The Evergreen State College operating budget by \$1.328 million and requires Evergreen to manage reductions by taking measures to achieve temporary savings by using tuition revenue from overenrollment, salary savings and/or reducing other expenditures.

The Council of Presidents testified on behalf of the four-year, public institutions regarding concerns that the bill encroaches on the flexibility provided in the Governor's proposed 2009 supplemental budget by requiring that the impact on academic programs is to be minimized and enrollments as directed in the 2007-2009 biennial budget.

The House held a public hearing on Senate Bill 5460 which prohibits institutions of higher education from using state funds or tuition to increase salaries and wages, establish new positions, sign new personal service contracts, acquire new equipment in excess of \$1,000, and make expenditures for state employee travel or training not related to an emergency or direct service delivery through the end of the current fiscal biennium.

Julie Suchanek, Director of Government Relations, along with representatives from the other five public, baccalaureate institutions testified before the House Ways & Means Committee regarding the substantial impact of Senate Bill 5460 on higher education.

Suchanek shared with policymakers that Evergreen, as a state institution, relies on state appropriations and tuition to carry out its mission. If enacted, Senate Bill 5460 would create several unintended consequences, such as impeding economic recovery by decreasing the number of service and personnel contracts entered into, minimizing the purchase of goods and equipment, and slowing construction projects.

In addition, SB 5460 would eliminate funding to finish improvements the College is seeking in public safety and diminish the educational experience of our students.

The House and Senate are expected to take action on the legislation some time next week.

In addition to the budget, Evergreen and representatives from the other public, four-year institutions testified to concerns regarding a handful of policy bills ranging from limiting eligibility to work-study (SB 5044) to the expansion of higher education through the establishment of new four-year institutions (SB 5575).

Public hearings are expected to be the primary focus for legislative committees for the next two and half weeks as the cut off for policy bills nears.

Highlights—At the Legislature Next Week

MONDAY, February 9, 2009

3:30 PM - HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET—HHR C

Public Hearing: HB 1376—Removing the requirement to purchase art for public buildings during the 2009-11 biennium. HB 1898—Setting priorities for higher education capital projects.

Work Session: HB 1451—Concerning state general obligation bonds and related accounts. HB 1452—Concerning economic stimulus. HB 1454—Eliminating the statutory debt limit.

TUESDAY, February 10, 2009

8:00 AM - HOUSE EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS—HHR A

Work Session: Briefing on education programs for reduction in the Governor's proposed 2009-2011 budget.

10:00 AM - HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION—HHR D

Public Hearing: HB 1467—Establishing the UW Snohomish county branch campus. HB 1726 - Creating Bellevue College.

10:00 AM - SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT—SHR 3

Work Session: Staff presentation on the budget reduction scenario approach and the results. Budget reduction plan presented by WSU and UW.

Public Hearing: SB 5526—Modifying disclosure requirements for private investment information received by the UW consolidated endowment fund. SB 5710 - Authorizing the board of regents at each state university to est. tuition fees rates.

10:00 AM - SENATE ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY—SHR 4

Public Hearing: SB 5118—Modifying the definition of biofuel. SB 5735—Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

3:30 PM - SENATE WAYS & MEANS—SHR 4

Public Hearing: SB 5693—Removing the requirement to purchase art for public buildings during the 2009-11 biennium.

WEDNESDAY, February 11, 2009

8:00 AM - SENATE EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION—SHR 1

Public Hearing: SB 5714—Providing conditional funding for teachers to pursue national board for professional teaching standards certification.

1:30 PM - HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION—HHR D

Public Hearing: HB 1671—Regarding higher education accountability. HB 1674—Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions of higher education. HB 1706—Expanding resident student eligibility for the purposes of the state need grant program.

3:30 PM - SENATE ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY—SHR 4

Public Hearing: SB 5560—Regarding state agency climate leadership

3:30 PM - SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT—SHR 3

Work Session: Budget reduction plan presented by CWU, EWU, Evergreen, and WWU

Public Hearing: SB 5734—Making certain current higher education tuition-setting practices permanent. SB 5776—Regarding student fees, charges, and assessments.

6:00 PM - HOUSE EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS—HHR A

Public Hearing: HB 1914—Regarding eligibility for higher education institutions maintenance and operations funds.

THURSDAY, February 12, 2009

12:00 PM - HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION AND HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES—HHR A

Work Session: Developments in Offender Education.

1:30 PM - SENATE WAYS & MEANS—SHR 4

Work Session: Higher education issues.

FRIDAY, February 13, 2009

8:00 AM - SENATE ENVIRONMENT, WATER, & ENERGY—SHR 4

Public Hearing: SB 5138—Creating an integrated climate change response strategy. SB 5385—Requiring a review of the embodied energy costs during the design of a public facility.

1:30 PM - SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT—SHR 3

Public Hearing: SB 5606—Creating the WA investment in student excellence scholarship program. SB 5576—Changing enrollment reporting for state employees receiving tuition waivers at institutions of higher education.

Legislative Update

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House and Senate Hold Public Hearings on Legislation Altering the Current PreK-12 System

For the past 18 months members of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance have worked and drafted recommendations to answer questions regarding the needs of basic education in the 21st century and how the state is meeting its constitutional obligation to fully fund basic education. Comprised of legislators, educators, a representative of the Governor, and a local school board member, the Task Force was commissioned to examine these questions and provide the missing link between the state's learning goals and its funding formula.

The goal of the Task Force was to move from a piecemeal reform and episodic patchwork to a coherent, durable, and transparent system that lives up to the constitutional mandate to define and fully fund basic education. The result was the development of recommendations that update the definition of basic education for the 21st century and offer options for a new funding structure. These recommendations were introduced as legislation - Senate Bill 5444 and House Bill 1410- in late January.

Most of the recommendations proposed in SB 5444 and HB 1410 focus on prek-12 education, including the improvement of funding for basic education, a focus on the value of programs of early learning, a reduction in class size, and an increase in access to data and information on educators' qualifications. However, both bills also make substantial changes to how teachers within preK-12 are prepared by the Colleges of Education in Washington.

Perhaps the largest change for teachers comes in a proposal to adopt a new salary allocation model that no longer awards a pay increase to teachers who earn an advanced degree. The final report issued by the Task Force provides some research that indicates evidence

regarding the lack of a relationship between advanced degrees and improvement in the quality of teaching.

The Evergreen State College and others testified before the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education, House Education, and House Education Appropriations Committees encouraging policymakers to re-evaluate the dated and divided research that underlies this assumption and to take into account the unanticipated consequences of this decision.

Julie Suchanek, Director of Government Relations for Evergreen, asked policymakers to give pause to the recommendations proposed in the legislation. She stated that Evergreen believes that teachers should consider themselves lifelong learners and that the removal of advanced degrees from the salary grid creates a disincentive for future and current teachers to access additional education to advance their own knowledge and skills.

In addition, Suchanek spoke to the absence of higher education from the discussion with regard to the current and future work proposed in the bills and the need for collaboration between the accreditation process and the proposed peer evaluation process outlined in the legislation.

Both the House and Senate have held public hearings on the bills. Suchanek along with representatives from Evergreen's Masters in Teaching program continue to talk with legislators. Action is expected on the legislation in the next week.

To view the final report of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance go to: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/joint/bef/FinalReport.pdf>