From: salem_update-bounces@lists.oregonstate.edu on behalf of Mills, Jock
To: CAS DeanStaff; CAS Unit Leaders; Salem Update Listserv
Subject: [Salem Update] Committee deadlines and ways and means hearings
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2009 4:24:12 PM
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Tuesday, was the deadline for most legislative committees in both the House and Senate to complete their work on bills that originated in their respective chambers. The last two weeks have been frenetic as legislators sought to get their bills out of committee. Bills that carry a price tag also needed "fiscal statements" that outline the costs associated with the bill and its amendments. The requirement to include fiscal statements before bills could be approved by a committee caused some confusion and delays. Rather than moving onto the floor, these bills move over to the Joint Ways and Means Committee. It remains to be determined how that committee will balance the increased costs required by these bills against the program cuts it must enact in order to balance the budget.

No bill is truly dead until the final gavel falls, yet two higher education bills that attracted attention earlier in the session appear to be stalled in committee. SB 7 which would have created a pre-paid tuition program, appears to have died of its own weight in the Senate Education and General Government Committee. HB 2939, which would have provided resident tuition for children of undocumented workers did not make it out of the House Education Committee.

Meanwhile back in the Ways and Means Committee, this week the Education Subcommittee completed its hearings on the higher education budget. What happens from here depends on talks between the sub-committee co-chairs (Sen. Rod Monroe, D-Portland, and Rep. Betty Komp, D-Woodburn, and the full committee co-chairs, Sen. Margaret Carter, D-Portland, and Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland).

Of course, the two largest determinants of what happens next will be the May 15 forecast which will predict the revenues available for the next biennium and the possible shortfalls that may occur in the remaining 6 weeks of the current biennium. The second determinant will be whether 3/5's of the legislators can agree to various plans to generate increased revenues through new taxes and fees. If the legislature is to adjourn by the self-imposed June 30th deadline, following the forecast, lawmakers have approximately 32 working days (not counting weekends) to hammer out deals that apportion cuts among the variety of state programs while increasing taxes or fees among the variety of corporate, individual, and other fee and tax paying entities in Oregon.

The Ways and Means Committee continues to make the rounds across Oregon to take public testimony on the forecasted shortfall. Tonight (5:30-8:00 PM) the committee will be at the OSU Cascades Campus in Bend. It will be possible to view the hearings at this link: http://oregonstate.edu/is/mediaservices/channel-1

Remaining Ways and Means Hearings:

Thursday, April 30 - Ashland
Southern Oregon University
Rogue River Room
Stevenson Union
1250 Siskiyou Boulevard
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday, May 1 - Eugene
University of Oregon
Lillis Hall, Room 182
955 East 13th Avenue
1 to 3:30 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings with Corvallis Legislators:

Saturday, May 2: League of Women Voters Town Hall Meeting
10:00 am, Corvallis Public Library

Saturday, May 16, 9am: Informal Coffee with Rep. Gelser
Sunnyside Up in downtown Corvallis, buy a cup of coffee and join Rep. Gelser for an informal conversation about issues important to you.

Wednesday, May 20, 7pm: Budget and Revenue Town Hall with Rep. Gelser
Grace Lutheran Church, Corvallis
Come hear the latest on the state budget and proposed revenue packages. Bring your questions, and share your ideas!

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