
FEDERAL RELATIONS

House Selects a New Speaker and Finishes Up Elementary Education Reauthorization

The House voted to confirm the current House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) as the 54th Speaker of the House. Rep. Ryan is a 16-year veteran of the House and received the support of all but nine of his Republican colleagues. As Speaker Ryan took the gavel on Thursday, he indicated his term as Speaker would be the beginning of a new time in the House where compromise and regular order would reign over the partisan turbulence that has marked the 114th Congress.

As an almost direct result of Speaker Ryan's election, Congress finished work on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) conference report. Speaker Ryan's past positions on education certainly range as seen in his budget proposals, which have generally cut the Department of Education's spending or focused on consolidating federal programs into block grants. In addition, he has been critical of the growth of Pell Grants and has recommended tighter eligibility rules for the grants, among other changes. The new Speaker also has championed student loans reform for low-income borrowers and advocated for K-12 school choice.

Unfortunately, Congress has not, and is not expected to, reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) this session of Congress. With a two-year budget deal now in place that sets top-line federal spending levels, Speaker Ryan says Democrats have less reason to fight, and he's looking to push up and accelerate the budget and appropriations process during the presidential election year.

GOP lawmakers say Speaker Ryan has outlined to them an ambitious plan in which the House Budget Committee advances a budget resolution soon after the president submits his request in early February, paving the way for the first of the 12 fiscal 2017 spending bills to hit the floor in mid- to late-March. They say Ryan has also pledged to devote significant floor time to debating all dozen titles. That would mark the earliest-ever floor consideration in the modern budget era and, frankly, a lofty promise for a presidential election year.

Speaker Ryan has a lot riding on his pledge. He made major promises to House conservatives as he sought the speakership, promising to open up the legislative process to the rank-and-file. That bought him enough political goodwill to shepherd the fiscal 2016 omnibus through the House and bring the John A. Boehner era to an end. But he will need to pay up in the New Year.

In theory, appropriations work should be easier in fiscal 2017 than it was the previous year. The October budget deal buys Speaker Ryan a détente on fights over spending levels — no small accomplishment. The drama will instead be largely restricted to policy riders. But that could also be a major drag on productivity, particularly in such a fierce election year.

The appropriations bills will be marked up and considered on the floor in the thick of primary season, and lawmakers likely won't be able to control themselves on seeking controversial policy riders, which are viewed as a weapon to wound and embarrass their political opponents. Riders essentially shut down the fiscal 2015 appropriations process before the 2014 midterms.

Second, Congress is not scheduled to be in Washington very much in 2016. Lawmakers are taking off seven weeks in July and August for the national conventions and recess, and an additional five in October ahead of the elections. That leaves little room for considering time-consuming appropriations bills on the floor, particularly when leaders could be much more easily moving messaging measures.

There's also the nearly unavoidable pull of history. Congress has passed at least one continuing resolution to kick off every appropriations season ahead of an election every two years for the last 18, according to the Congressional Research Service. (Fiscal 1997 was the last time they did not need a stopgap ahead of an election.) The trend is unlikely to end now.

Those odds don't have all lawmakers feeling grim. Some of the spending bills with national security components are more bipartisan and could stand a chance at seeing enactment before the Oct. 1 start of the fiscal year.

Fiscal 2017 will also be the last cycle at the helm of the appropriations committees for two of their central figures: Kentucky Republican Rep. Harold Rogers and Maryland Democratic Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski. With the former term-limited as chairman and the latter retiring, the two powerhouses will undoubtedly work fiercely to see their priorities enacted while they're still on top.

The Budget

More than 75 days into the fiscal year, Congress passed a budget that funds a majority of the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year until the end of September 2015. The last-minute agreement, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 (H.R. 83), passed the House and Senate by bipartisan votes of 219-206 and 56-40, respectively. The one appropriations bill not included is Homeland Security, which will be funded until the end of February to allow additional time for Congress to respond to the president's executive order on immigration.

Given the moniker "cromnibus," as it is a hybrid continuing resolution and omnibus, H.R. 83 follows both the discretionary cap first designed in the Budget Control Act and later modified in last year's Bipartisan Budget Agreement, which reduced the funding reductions from sequestration. Thus, the spending package provides \$521 billion for defense and \$492 billion for nondefense discretionary spending, essentially providing level funding compared to FY 2014.

Some of the highlights of the final version of the Cromnibus that could potentially impact Wayne State University include:

- \$32.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is \$2 billion than the 2015 enacted level and \$900 million more than the House bill.
- \$3.4 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is the same as the 2015 enacted level and \$25 million more than the House bill.
- \$570 million for Aid for Institutional Development, which is \$40 million more than the 2015 enacted level and \$26 million more than the House bill.
- \$334 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which is \$34 million less than the 2015 enacted level and \$334 million more than the House bill.
- \$22.5 billion for Pell Grants, which is the same as the 2015 enacted level and \$370 million more than the bill that was originally passed in the House. When combined with mandatory funding, these discretionary funds will enable the maximum grant to increase to an estimated \$5,915, an increase of \$140 in the 2016-2017 school year.

Upcoming Washington, D.C. Events

Washington will likely focus on the following upcoming matters for the next quarter (in addition to the various caucuses and primaries throughout the nation):

- January 2, 2016: President Obama returns to Washington
- January 5, 2016: House of Representatives reconvenes in Washington
- January 11, 2016: Senate reconvenes in Washington
- January 12, 2016: State of the Union Address
- February 2016: President to release FY 2017 Budget
- July 8-9, 2016: NATO Summit in Warsaw, Poland

STATE RELATIONS

Subcommittee on Campus Sexual Assault Grants

The House Appropriations Higher Education and State Police subcommittees held a hearing on November 12 to hear from some of the colleges and universities that applied for grants to address sexual assault on their campuses. Fourteen of the 15 public universities applied for the grants and 13 universities received some sort of grant

funding from the Department of State Police. The Subcommittees heard from the University of Michigan, Central Michigan University and Grand Valley State University.

The most in-depth testimony came from the University of Michigan, which conducted a survey on the Ann Arbor campus that showed 11.4 percent of students on campus had been a victim of unwanted sexual contact. Two other concerns from the survey showed that many cases were not even reported and, if they were, the University might not have the resources to investigate all of them.

A couple of Subcommittee members asked whether or not all institutions should be performing these types of surveys. Other members wondered if it should be put in the budget that all universities report annually on their efforts to curb these assaults on their campus and how those efforts are performing.

We would not be surprised to hear some sort of discussion regarding boilerplate or other language in the upcoming budget along these lines.

Meetings with House and Senate Officials

The Division of Government and Community Affairs recently met with key individuals in the House and Senate to begin discussing budget matters for the upcoming state budget.

During these meetings, we discussed the higher education budget (and tuition restraint); the possibility of a Capital Outlay budget; and the future of autism funding.

As for the overall state budget picture, there will be plenty of spending pressures on the state's budget going into the next fiscal year. Because of this, officials do not expect there would be much new money for various initiatives, including the higher education budget.

On tuition restraint, most believe it will still be included in the coming year's budget but were not sure at what level. Some officials we have spoken to believe that because two universities went over the cap last year, tuition restraint language could be changed to make it more difficult for an institution to go over the cap. Again, while nothing has been finalized, we might expect to see tuition restraint tied to some of the base funding (in addition to any new funding that would be tied to it).

Also, some officials believe there is a possibility of a Capital Outlay budget moving through the legislature in the coming year. The assessment is that the Governor will once again propose a Capital Outlay budget with just a few projects and the legislature may increase the number of projects through the budget process. This would give WSU a greater chance of getting a project if that is the case.

We have also talked with officials regarding funding for university autism initiatives in the coming year. As you will recall, WSU led the charge in changing the language in the budget to allow the autism funding for universities to be a competitive process. Because of that change, WSU was able to obtain some funding in the current fiscal year; however, officials we have spoken to affirm that the fund where this money has come from over the years is essentially empty. Because it looks as though it could be a tight budget year, there does not seem to be much desire to place more money into this fund at this time.

We also discussed other ways in which the University could obtain funding from the State outside of the higher education budget.

Next University Research Corridor (URC) Brown Bag Lunch

The next URC Brown Bag Luncheon will be February 22, 2016, at the Capitol in Lansing.

The topic/theme will be *The Science of Education – “Teaching Teachers”* with a focus on putting research into action. What sets us apart from other university education schools in Michigan is that we are not only preparing teachers for the classroom but we are undertaking research that forms the basis for new teaching methods, etc.

Dr. Jennifer Lewis, Assistant Professor, Mathematics Education in the College of Education and Director of TEACHDetroit, will represent Wayne State at this luncheon and talk about the program. The TEACHDetroit program recently received a \$1.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. The new TEACHDetroit program will prepare the next generation of elementary and middle school mathematics teachers in Detroit, at a time when United States students lag behind their international peers in mathematics achievement.

Also discussed was coordinating visits with House/Senate staff and other policy folks in Lansing to brief them on the URC Benchmark & Economic Impact report, which will come out in January. This could coincide with the February 22nd event or be done independent of the luncheon date. We will be discussing this idea further at our next meeting.

Joint House Higher Ed/Community Colleges Meeting

In early November, the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee and the House Higher Education Community Colleges Appropriations Subcommittee held a joint hearing to discuss enrollment issues at the state's higher education institutions.

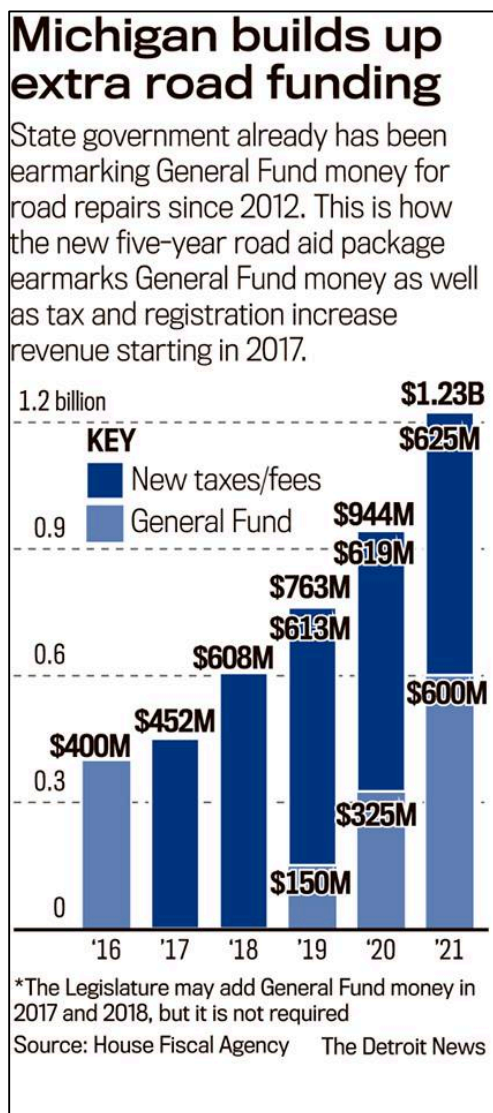
The joint committee heard from the state's demographer; the Business Leaders for Michigan; the Chancellor of the University of Michigan-Flint; the President of

Northwestern Michigan College; and John Austin, the President of the State Board of Education.

The chairs of the committees heard about the number of students currently in high school in Michigan and how the number will be declining. They seemed concerned as to what that would mean for enrollment at the state's community colleges and universities in the near future.

Legislature Passes Transportation Bills

On November 3rd, the House and Senate passed legislation that aims to fund road and bridge repair in the state. The Governor signed the legislation a week later.



The plan will eventually generate \$1.2 billion in annual road spending. It won't, however, reach the funding milestone until the end of 2018.

Lawmakers chose to phase in the new road money, at least half of which consists of a 7.3-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax increase and a 20 percent vehicle registration fee hike.

The proposal starts with a combined \$452 million increase in higher annual fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees in 2017 that grows to \$608 million in 2018. It is followed by gradually earmarking another \$600 million of existing income tax revenue in fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The chart to the left appeared in the Detroit News and shows the mix of revenue that will go towards roads and bridges over the next few years:

Of course, of big concern to the state universities is the fact that the general fund revenue is undetermined at this point. Some Republicans who touted the plan believe that the state will grow enough revenue in the future to pay for this plan; however, there is no certainty in that. If this does not occur, corresponding cuts to general fund programs would have to occur by a future governor and legislature in order to pay for the plan.

College Value and Affordability Solutions Summit

The Center for Michigan and Bridge Magazine held a College Value and Affordability Solutions Summit on November 2nd.

Governor Snyder delivered a keynote address and the presidents of the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Grand Valley State University were on a panel titled "Public Support for Deeper State Investment & Increased Accountability."

While we were not in attendance because of a meeting on campus, Gongwer News Service reported that one of the complaints the Governor had about the higher education institutions was that "universities are putting more pressure on themselves to construct new buildings by concentrating classes from Monday through Thursday and steering away from 8 a.m. classes."

The Governor also "outlined six ways universities could make attending a four-year university more affordable. The third point Mr. Snyder outlined was financial management and he pointed to "asset utilization" and prefaced his remarks that he would 'get in trouble' after making them."

Revenue Estimating Conference

The state's Revenue Estimating Conference will take place on January 14th in Lansing. The heads of the House and Senate Fiscal Agencies will meet with the State Treasurer to determine how much revenue will be available for the Governor's proposed budget.

Governor's State of the State

The Governor's office has announced that his State of the State speech will take place on January 19th at 7 p.m. in Lansing.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

2015 "Canstruction" Drive

For the fourth consecutive year, WSU partnered with Gleaners Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan, Kroger and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for the annual Canstruction project. Canstruction is a unique charity that hosts competitions, exhibitions and events showcasing colossal structures made entirely out of full cans of food. After the structures are built, the creations go on display to the public as a giant art exhibition.

This year's Canstruction was held on Saturday, December 5, 2015, during NOEL Night at WSU's Welcome Center. Kroger provided a sponsor gift of \$10,000 to assist with purchasing the cans for this project. There were eleven teams that created structures,

including WSU's Facilities Planning & Management (FP&M) team. FP&M raised \$3,125 and 3,573 cans were donated to Gleaners Community Food Bank. FP&M donations equal 2,713 meals to needy families. The teams in total donated more than 40,000 cans, providing an equivalent of 23,053 meals.

Combined Charitable Contributions Campaign

The Combined Charitable Contributions Campaign ran from November 11, 2015, through December 10, 2015. The charitable organizations participating in the campaign are the Black United Fund and United Way for Southeastern Michigan. Both organizations provide numerous community service programs through a large network of volunteers and donors. The year's campaign raised a total of **\$72,000**.

Community Engagement Liaisons Meeting

On December 8, 2015, a group of 20 community engagement liaisons from across the University met for our second quarterly meeting. These meetings are an opportunity for personnel involved in community engagement from across the University to come together to collaborate and communicate on various initiatives, programs, and events the various schools, colleges and departments are working on.

At this meeting, the Division of Government and Community Affairs discussed added resources the office created/implemented in order to allow liaisons to better accomplish their goals. The first resource is a reinvigorated Government and Community Affairs Calendar which now allows representatives from across the University access to cross-post events that may be of interest to the public. Our office also built a listserv as a means for internal communication and collaboration among community engagement liaisons. Finally, the office has updated and reactivated its FaceBook page, and has also created an Instagram account.

Moving forward, we will be working to create an office eNewsletter, hold regular committee meetings with community engagement liaisons, and provide opportunities to learn best practices for community engagement professionals.