
FEDERAL AFFAIRS

House Higher Education Reform

The House Ed and Workforce Committee advanced the College Cost Reduction Act (HR.6951) this week along party lines (22-19). As noted previously, the bill would require IHEs to take on risk payments for students unable to repay their loans, place additional limitations of federal student aid, repeals regulations safeguarding students from predatory for profits colleges, reforms accreditation standards, and adds incentive grants to address college cost and student success. Large portions of the bill were of concern to both ACE and APLU among other higher education groups. The bill is not likely to have any traction in the Senate and may not even see the House floor this Congress, but DGCA will continue to monitor.

Bipartisan Tax Deal

The House has passed a bipartisan tax package that now heads to the Senate. The bill contains temporary expansion of the Child Tax Credit along with some business tax provisions including R&D expensing, and bonus depreciation.

Border/Foreign Aid

The long-negotiated border reform and foreign assistance for Ukraine and Israel deal is expected to be revealed this weekend. Senate Majority Leader Schumer has indicated that he would bring it up for a vote as early as Wednesday.

Budget/Appropriations

- *FY2024* - The appropriators have agreed to the 302(b) spending caps for each of the twelve appropriations bills for FY24, which means negotiations can begin in earnest on the individual bill levels. This is also good news for the earmark process as it sets the stage for hopefully receiving our targeted mark for the School of Public Health. Will continue to advocate for it with the delegation and let you know if it comes through. As a reminder, current funding deadlines are March 1 and March 8.
- *FY2025* – We anticipate Congressionally Directed Spending application portals to open sometime between mid-February and mid-March and will be available for roughly three weeks. This is a good sign that the CDS requests will be processed for the FY25 funding year, though we still need to get through the current fiscal year. We will be working with the respective teams on campus to finalize requests and have begun the work of socializing them with targeted members of the delegation.

STATE AFFAIRS

State of the State Address

The Governor Whitmer presented her sixth State of the State address on January 24, 2024. President Espy and Governors Land and Atkinson were all present as floor guests for the Governor's speech. Governor Whitmer's theme for her speech built on the "Make It in Michigan" theme she rolled out during last year's State of the State.

Community College for All

The Governor noted that to grow Michigan's economy it must be driven by skilled talent. The Governor wants to continue to address the cost-prohibitive nature of continuing education after high school by removing additional cost barriers.

As such, the Governor's plan is focused on making the first two years of community college tuition-free for every high school graduate. The Governor projects that this will save students on average \$4,000 toward an associate degree or skills certificate, and will help the Governor achieve her Sixty by 30 goal, which is to have 60 percent of working-age adults earn a postsecondary education by 2030.

Pre-K for All

Whitmer's speech noted how every child deserve a shot at a brighter future in Michigan and one way to accomplish this is by having kids attend pre-K. Attending pre-K is one way to better prepare students when they enter kindergarten. She noted how students who attend pre-K have much better academic outcomes, higher graduation rates, and earn more when they start working. Pre-K, however, is cost prohibitive for many families and almost 40 percent of Michigan's 4-year-olds do not attend.

To address this, the Governor proposed expanded access to pre-K by making it free for every 4-year-old in Michigan in her upcoming budget. The Governor noted that she believes this will help attract employers seeking to expand or relocate in Michigan by giving parents more safe, affordable options for children while they work.

Make It In Michigan

The Governor continued to build on her economic development proposals from the past two years. In her speech, she noted that while Michigan continues to grow its car manufacturing base, she is also looking to ensure Michigan dominates in manufacturing of batteries, chips, and clean energy.

As such, she proposed four additional economic development policies to expand Michigan's efforts to grow and attract businesses to Michigan. Those proposals include:

Bring Back the Research & Development Tax Credit: Michigan is one of just a handful of states without a tax credit to incentivize research and development. The Governor called on the Legislature to pass the R&D Tax Credit legislation that is currently before them.

Establish HIRE Michigan Fund: The Governor noted how our current economic development tools are limited when it comes to attracting small and second stage businesses. The Governor proposed a HIRE Michigan Fund that will lower overall payroll taxes for these types of businesses.

Renaissance Zones Modifications: The Governor called on the Legislature to simplify the state's existing Renaissance Zone program. The current program offers businesses lower tax burdens in strategic areas that need more investment and jobs. The Governor's proposal is to remove the existing categories (or interest areas) into a single, flexible one that allows the state to be nimble when looking to invest in companies and communities.

Establish an Innovation Fund: The Governor proposed establishing a fund to help launch new Michigan-based startups since the state does not currently have any mechanism to attract and retain existing young companies.

Caregiver Tax Credit

Governor Whitmer also highlighted that caregiving is difficult, both financially and emotionally, and noted how this burden often falls on women and women of color. To help ease those burdens the Governor proposed a *MI Family Tax Credit* of up to \$5,000 to cover caregiving expenses such as counseling, transportation, nursing, and respite services.

Building and Rebuilding Michigan

The Governor proposed policies related to investing the states infrastructure as it relates to the State's roads and bridges, as well as affordable housing.

Roads and Bridge Infrastructure: Whitmer noted that "fixing the damn roads" and bridges is a top priority and impacts the State's population and economy. As such, she proposed authorizing the final \$700 million in bonding authority the state has to expand the continued improvement of roads and bridges.

Building Housing: Whitmer’s proposal highlighted that many Michigan families spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent or mortgage. Moreover, Michigan’s housing stock is old with nearly half being built before 1970. To address housing costs, increase available stock, and provide construction jobs, the Governor proposed investing \$1.4 billion to build or rehabilitate 10,000 homes. The proposal will include a mix of family homes, apartments, and mixed-use buildings.

Legislation Update

WSU DGCA continues to monitor state legislation and regulations that could impact our students, our faculty, our community, and our ability to carry out our mission. When formulating a university position, we work with internal subject matter experts to both craft the best position and to provide feedback to legislators. Further, we work collaboratively with both our URC partners and all 15 public universities to leverage our collective positions and create favorable outcomes as often as possible.

We are currently monitoring, and actively engaging, on several pieces of legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Senate Bill 32** (Santana) Amends the Wage & Fringe Benefits Act (Wage & Hour) to allow a law enforcement agency and law enforcement training academy to recoup the costs of training based on time served.
- **Senate Bill 74** (Singh) Creates the “Higher Education Sexual Assault Prevention, Advocacy, and Resource Officer Act” to be housed within the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. – WSU Opposes on autonomy groups; Hearing likely in early April.
- **Senate Bill 184** (Webber) Supplemental Appropriation bill that would provide funding for university and community college safety grants.
- **State Bill 185** (Irwin) Amends Public Employment Relations Act to delete a provision that excludes graduate research assistants from unionizing.
- **Senate Bill 202** (McCann) Supplemental Appropriation bill for Higher Education (FY 23-24)
- **Senate Bill 329** (Irwin) Creates a “bill of rights” for policyholders, requiring insurance companies to exercise “good faith and fair dealing” in the investigation, adjustment, evaluation, and payment of claims and to “give all reasonable benefit of the doubt” to claimants.
- **Senate Bill 350** (Bayer) Allows for room and board expenses under the Promise Zone Authority Act.
- **Senate Bill 555** (Anthony) Modifies Michigan Promise Zone authority membership.

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- **Senate Bill 568** (Polehanki) Adds certain requirements for the approval of teacher education programs.
 - **Senate Bill 463** (Camilleri) Amends the Revised School Code to require completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by pupils as condition of graduation.
 - **HJR A** (Johnsen) is a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the state constitution of 1963, by amending sections 5 and 6 of article VIII, to prohibit public universities from restricting or regulating the carrying of concealed pistols on university property except as authorized by law.
 - **House Bill 4017** (Witwer) School Aid Supplemental bill that could be used for Higher Education purposes, including modifications to the Michigan Achievement Scholarship.
 - **House Bills 4277 & 4278** (Paiz) Requires certain research facilities to offer certain laboratory animals for adoption before euthanization.
 - **House Bill 4319** (Witwer) Authorizes university officials to provide guidance to student athletes on Name, Image, Likeness compensation.
 - **House Bill 4328** (McCann) Amends the Liquor Control Code to allow the Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) to grant licenses to sell alcohol for on-premises consumption to the governing board of a public university if certain conditions are met.
 - **House Bill 4482** (Brixie) Extends period of limitations for civil actions for criminal sexual conduct from age 28 to age 52, extends statute of limitations after the time of discovery from three years to seven years, and eliminates SOL if there is a criminal conviction in each case, and establishes a two-year revival window for survivors whose SOL previously expired.
 - **House Bill 4482** (Steckloff) Modifies period of limitation civil actions for criminal sexual conduct.
 - **House Bill 4483** (Arbit) Revises statute of limitations and notice requirements for actions against state government regarding sexual conduct violations.
 - **House Bill 4484** (Miller) Eliminates statute of limitations for certain criminal sexual conduct violations.
 - **House Bill 4485** (Whitsett) Allows governmental agency and employee liability for criminal sexual conduct.
 - **House Bill 4486** (Scott) Provides exception to notice requirements for civil actions for criminal sexual conduct filed in court.
 - **House Bill 4497** (Rheingans) Amends Public Employment Relations Act to delete a provision that excludes graduate research assistants **and** student athletes from unionizing.

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- **House Bill 4681** (Breen) Creates a “bill of rights” for policyholders, requiring insurance companies to exercise “good faith and fair dealing” in the investigation, adjustment, evaluation, and payment of claims and to “give all reasonable benefit of the doubt” to claimants.
 - **House Bill 4849** (Koleszar) Would prohibit research on cats and dogs if the research or training activities cause any pain or distress to the animal.
 - **House Bills 4853** (Steckloff) and **4854** (Scott) Amends the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against students for wearing traditional regalia.
 - **House Bill 5102** (Puri) Provides additional research and development tax credit for collaboration with research universities.
 - **House Bills 5184** (Brabec) and **5185** (Ewards) Amend the Public Health Code to make modifications to licensure requirements for Social Workers in the State of Michigan.
 - **House Bill 5187** (Hood) Creates the Research and Development Tax Credit Definitions Act and defines research university as a public university or an independent nonprofit college or university in Michigan.

Legislators and Other Elected Official Engagement

Since the last Board of Governor’s meeting, the Division of Government and Community Affairs and its team has continued to engage statewide elected officials, legislators, department personnel, and key staff issues impacting Wayne State University. Below is a selected list of recent meetings since the last Board of Governors meeting:

- Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks
- State Senator Sarah Anthony
- State Senator Sylvia Santana
- State Senator Erika Geiss
- State Senator Thomas Albert
- State Senator Kevin Hertel
- State Senator Sean McCann
- State Senator Stephanie Chang
- Speaker Joe Tate
- Speaker Pro Temp Laurie Pohutsky
- Majority Floor Leader Abraham Aiyash
- State Representative Angela Witwer
- State Representative Christine Morse
- State Representative Carol Glanville
- State Representative Natalie Price
- State Representative Reggie Miller
- State Representative Matt Koleszar
- State Representative Jerry Neyer
- State Representative Christine Morse
- State Representative John Fitzgerald
- State Representative Julie Rogers
- State Representative Donavan McKinney
- State Representative Helena Scott

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- State Representative Tyrone Carter
 - State Representative Stephanie Young
 - State Representative Will Snyder
 - State Representative Mike McFall
 - State Representative Tom Kuhn
 - State Representative Jennifer Conlin
 - MiLEAP Director, Michelle Richard
 - DHHS Director, Elizabeth Hertel
 - MEDC CEO, Quentin Messer
 - State Budget Director Jennifer Flood
 - House Budget Director Joe Fedewa
 - Senate Budget Director Andy Solon

Student Legislative Engagement

The Division of Government and Community Affairs partners with students, faculty and staff who have an interest in participating in the legislative process. Members of Science Policy Network-Detroit, a student group at WSU that aims to break down barriers between policy makers and researchers, has continued to work with our office to increase efforts in Lansing and Washington, D.C. DGCA also worked with the College of Pharmacy on its advocacy day in Lansing during the Fall semester. DGCA has also engaged provided guest lectures to students interested in advocacy and public policy. DGCA is working with Sci-Pol Detroit for an upcoming March 20 Lansing Advocacy Day, as well as with Office of Women's Health's SOS Maternity Network on March 5 Advocacy Day.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

The Division of Government and Community Affairs (DGCA) continues its work of initiating new and supporting existing WSU external community engagement. Stacie Clayton, Community Affairs Director, provides leadership and internal support and guidance to the university's various colleges, schools and divisions on special events, programs, and other matters as needed.

Community and Government Engagement

- Led coordination for Alternative Spring Break for students from Athletics, School of Social Work, Political Science and Public Health to partner with Wayne County's Meals on Wheels for ride-alongs with staff and volunteers to deliver food to homebound seniors
- Facilitated collaboration between Detroit Public Schools and Sci-Pol Detroit to hold science fair at WSU
- Coordinated campus tour and lunch as college engagement for Figure Skating Detroit – the only entity to combine figure skating with college readiness

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- Hosted lunch for Detroit School of the Arts senior class visit to campus for Black History Program with Department of African American Studies
 - The Division of Government and Community Affairs, Office of the Provost Student Success and the Center for Gender Studies presented a lunchtime speaker's event – "*Passion Meets Purpose: Academic Excellence For Wayne State University Diverse Learners*" with Dr. Luis Ponjuán. He is a tenured faculty member, researcher, and public policy scholar in the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University. Dr. Ponjuán's keynote address aimed to facilitate and inspire Wayne State University and the local community to address the educational experiences of diverse student learners
 - Presented *Detroit History is Black History* panel discussion for WSU and the community in honor of Black History Month in partnership with the Department of African American Studies, the Organization of Black Studies and the Juneteenth Planning Committee
 - Assisted with Wayne County Department of Public Services participating in the College of Engineering's Career Fair
 - Connected Athletic Director Erika Wallace with the Woodbridge Community Council for presentation at their meeting
 - Hosted meeting with President Espy and the Asian American Pacific Islander representatives at Freer House to introduce the President to key stakeholders in the AAPI community and to discuss their business and community concerns

Sponsorships

- **Detroit Policy Conference** where President Espy gave a keynote address regarding college to career readiness to support the state's Grow Michigan effort
- **Detroit Economic Club Luncheon Speakers' Series**
 - Grow Detroit Michigan Panel Discussion
 - Jerry Norcia, DTE CEO
 - Governor Gretchen Whitmer
- **Arthur L. Johnson and Damon J. Keith Classical Roots Celebration** (Chair Stancato was honored)
- **Amigos de SER Metro Annual Luncheon**
- **Detroit Urban League Distinguished Warriors Dinner**